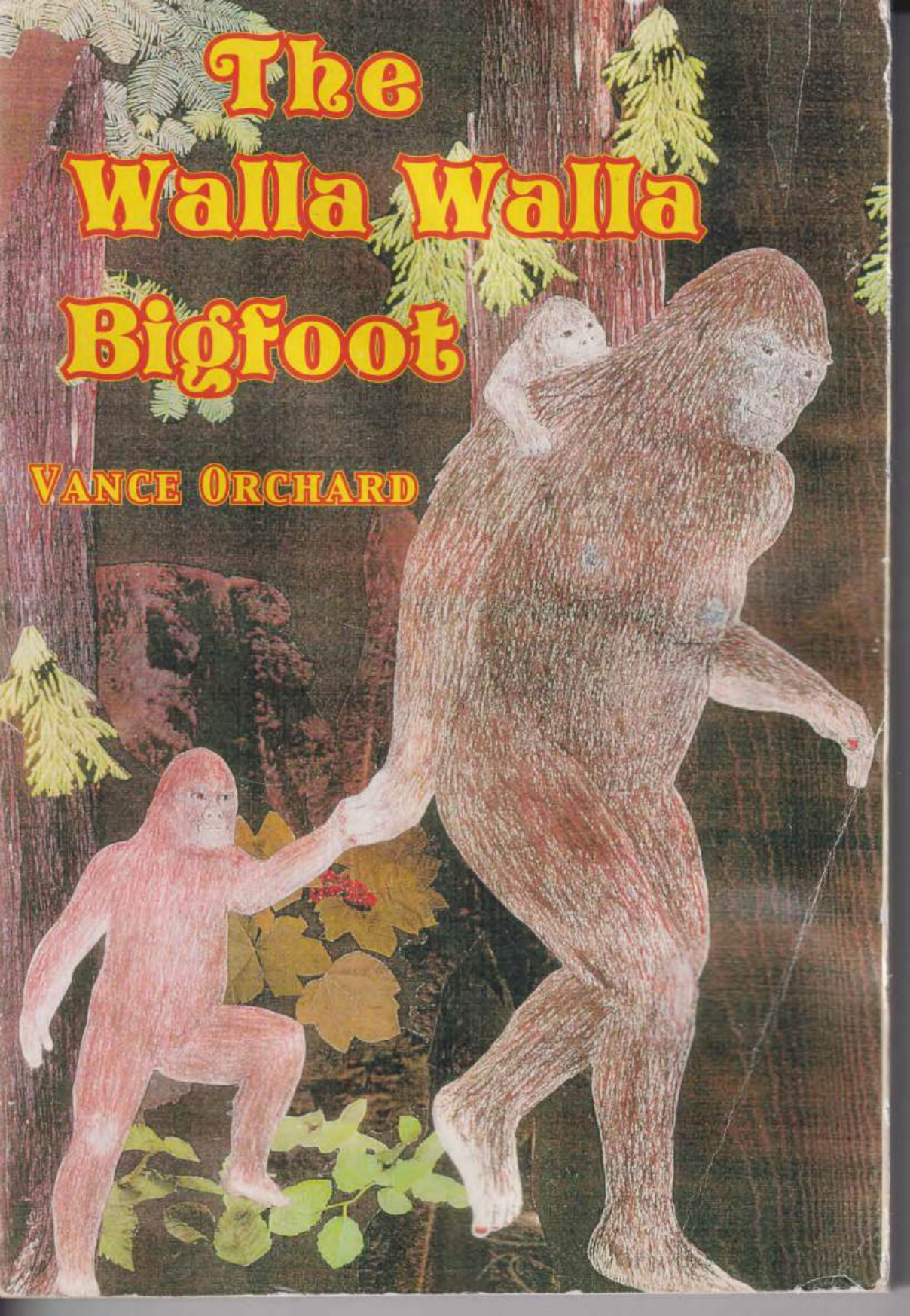
The Walla Walla Bigfoot

Vance Orchard



The Walla Walla Bigfoot

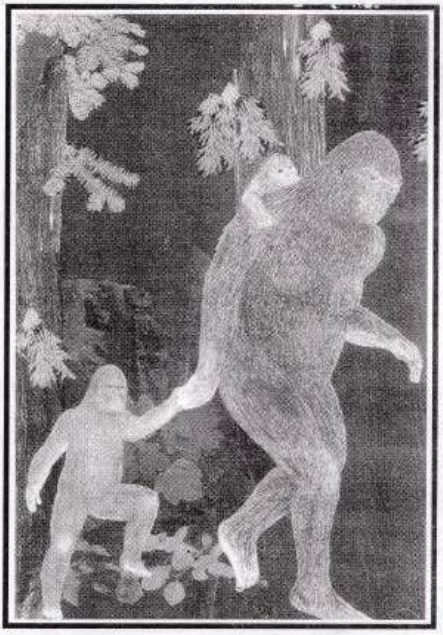
Updating of
The 1993 Book
"Bigfoot of the Blues"

by

Vance Orchard

2001

Cover Artwork



A 'FAMILY' MATTER?

It seemed fitting, with there being several stories of a 'family' of Bigfoots reported from time to time, that our book's cover should depict such a scene, captured well by our artist, Rob Alley.

JOHN ROBERT ALLEY studied zoology and human skeletal anatomy at the University of Manitoba, where he graduated in anthropology in 1968, working part-time as an illustrator. He is an avid student of human gait, and holds degrees in both chiropractic and physical therapy. Since the early 1970s his work as a rehabilitation consultant has taken him throughout the western states and provinces, where he has participated in investigations of Sasquatch sightings and tracks. Dr. Alley lives with his wife and two children in Ketchikan, Alaska,. He is currently completing an anthology of Sasquatches/ Bigfoots in Southeastern Alaska and coastal British Columbia.

ROB ALLEY

Dar Addington of Walla Walla not only raises goats for packing she is a good artist as well. When asked to do a whimsical piece about the late Wes Sumerlin, long-time guru of Bigfootery in the Blue Mountains, this was the result. And yes, Wes enjoyed the result, too!

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Preface

"The Walla Walla Country" has had that title since the Lewis and Clark expedition came through the region in the fall of 1805. Here, in a bend of the Snake River as it nears the Columbia River, was the homeland of the Walla Walla Tribe of Northwest Indians.

Since the coming of the Captains Lewis and Clark, there have been reports of the huge, manlike creatures known as "Bigfoot" and "Sasquatch." The reports by the White men were known as Bigfoot. But, Indian lore of centuries before had told of the Sasquatch here.

As of the year 2000, the recorded history of the Walla Walla Bigfoot of the Northern Blue Mountains is 100 years old.

In 1982, when Forest Service employee, Paul Freeman, reported a Bigfoot he had encountered, it merely marked the onset of a decade of Bigfoot activity in the Blues. This and other Bigfoot sightings in a 100-year span have been recorded only a few miles from Walla Walla, a city of some 30,000 population.

Since 1992, more good sightings of Big-foot and his activities have been recorded in this area. It is this sizeable number of incidents which have led to the claim by residents that this is truly a "heartland of Bigfoot country."

When the book "Bigfoot of the Blues," was published in 1993 to tell this story since 1900, the book and Paul Freeman got some bad press from some quarters. That criticism of the Freeman sightings and the entire scope of the Walla Walla Bigfoot came from some so-called "Bigfoot experts." This is also a reason for the publication of this current edition of the story behind the Bigfoot saga found in the Blue Mountains near Walla Walla.

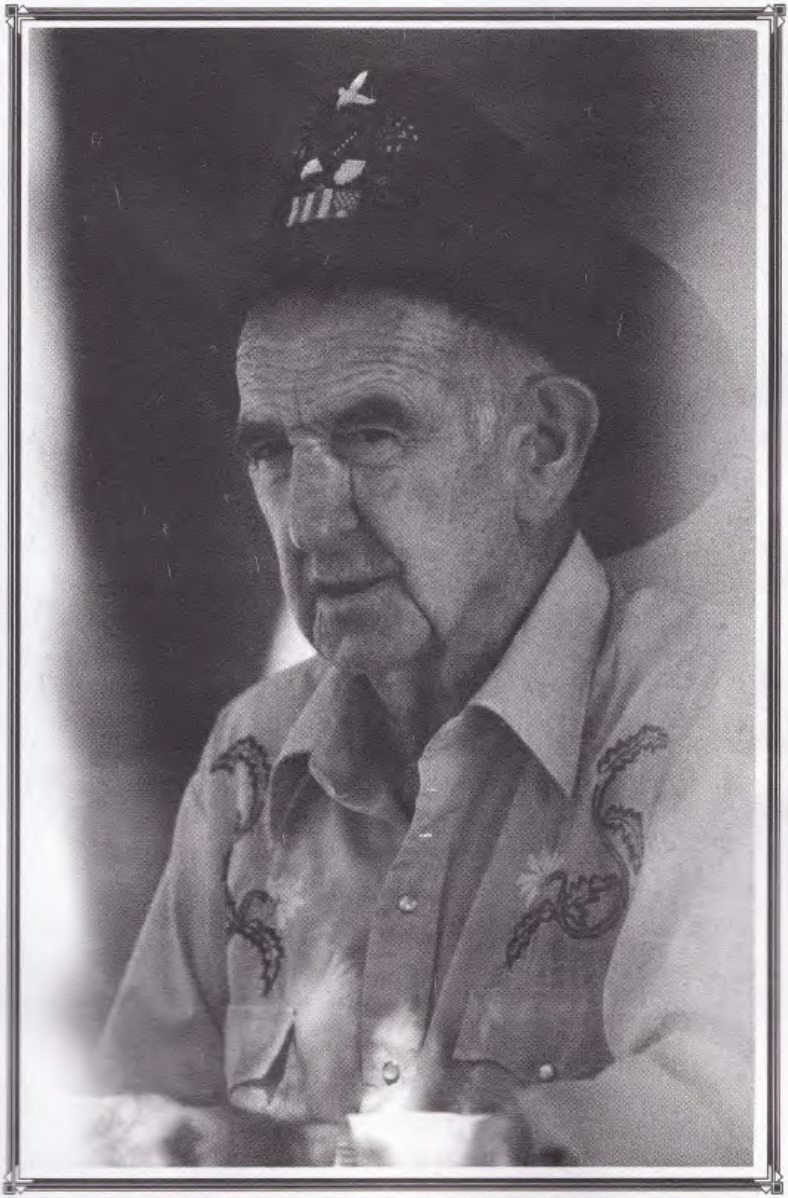
It was deemed important that the record should be set straight to correct the distortion and falsification of the findings and reports of Bigfoot activity in this Walla Walla region. These were the findings not only of Freeman but those made by a host of people, many made several years before Freeman came to Walla Walla. This current book includes findings of professional outdoors people and others which have been reported since the "Bigfoot of the Blues" book appeared in 1993.

It will be further shown how an intensive examination of those who told their stories in the 1993 book was carried out. This

examination was performed by a person who came to Walla Walla seeking background information so he could write a review of the '93 book. Dr. Jeffrey Meldrum was assigned this task by Richard Greenwell, secretariat of the "International Society of Cryptozoology." That review was subsequently published in the Society's journal, Cryptozoology. What came out of Meldrum's research is one of the most revealing critiques of the Walla Walla area Bigfoot. What Meldrum learned and how it affected the search for the elusive creature is a major reason for this book's publication.

This Book is Dedicated to
A True Man For the Mountains

'Wes Sumerlin'



Dedication

The Blue Mountains have meant many things to many people for a lot of years.

Those mountains hold a whole different meaning with the passing early in 1999 of the "Grand Old Man of the Blues," Wes Sumerlin.

Somehow, whenever one mentioned the Blues, it was so often synonymous with Sumerlin. He'd been a part of the nearby mountains since he was 14. Also synonymous were the words "horse" and "Sumerlin." One of those always went with the other. I'm sure there always were horses in the corral at the Sumerlin home.

So it was that it was horses and the Blues when Wes and I crossed paths back in the 50s. We were both involved in the Walla Walla '59ers, an organization called into action to promote the 1959 centennial of the city, county and Whitman College. Focal point was a 100-year-old stagecoach.... and its hitch of four horses.

As a reporter I chronicled much of what when on with the '59ers, especially as it happened out of town .... my Walla Walla news beat in those days. And, Wes became a major player as a driver of the team as it traveled around to various parades and rodeos, all the time promoting the Centennial. His role with the '59ers I recall most vividly was as the driver of the coach over the mountains by back roads to the Chief Joseph Rodeo of 1970. To say the least, the entry into the arena when the coach arrived there made a big splash.

Besides this adventure, Wes and I shared several other mountain trips.... on foot, on horseback and in a truck or car .... mostly on the track of the elusive Bigfoot. The creature's existence has been held in doubt by some but never (make that NEVER!) by the family of Wes Sumerlin. Several experiences of the family with the creature have been recounted by Wes and his family who have always equated Bigfoot with the rest of the wildlife they find in the mountains.

Probably the favorite portion of the Blues for the Sumerlins has been the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness Area, established in 1978. The trails around the perimeter of the Wilderness have also held their attractions, as have the camping sites on and off those trails. Their

attraction is likely due to the fact the campgrounds were once places favored by the Nez Perce Indians and other Indian tribes before the arrival of the white man, Wes told me.

It's an area also made to order for the Bigfoot.

Sumerlin himself had an interest in Bigfoot since he was a child. For that matter, the creature was part of his rearing on the Colville Indian Reservation where he spent his childhood. He was part Indian. The reservation is where he was taught the skills of tracking and staying alive in the wilds.

His first involvement with the Walla Walla Bigfoot came when he was running a pack string into the mountains here at age 14 and occasionally would come across the big footprints.

Wes described an early encounter with the Bigfoot on one of his packstring assignments. He described the incident in a tour guide assembled in 1998 by Northwest Heritage Resources in Olympia. It touches on highpoints along the way on U. S. Highway 12 from Richland to Clarkston. The feature for the Walla Walla section was Wes and his Bigfoot knowledge and collection. In the tape-book Wes recounts an early Bigfoot incident of his in the late 1930s: Here's how he told the story:

"Between '36 and '39 I was going down a canyon, six mules behind me, and all at once, those mules tracked like they wanted to run over me. They were bucking up, trying to pass on the trial, and all I could see was a wreck coming up. I looked back, I happened to notice across the canyon, a bear come out of the brush and I take a second look and it wasn't a bear. It was standing upright, walking on its hind feet. A bear walks (upright) six or seven steps, then it goes back down and goes on four feet.

"But this kept coming two footed. Then it went right across the ridge into the next brush. Then I didn't see him no more for maybe a mile. The wind shifted and that's what it was, the mules were smelling this critter!" They weren't seeing it, they were smelling the thing.

"We were coming around the river and they started piling up again and I looked back and I was looking for it that time. First two or three times I looked back, I didn't see nothing. Then I did see it. About halfway across the ridge, I picked it up going down into the brush. I didn't see it no more."

"I was telling one of the guys and they went up there to look at

them tracks and they couldn't believe it!"

They said, "That can't be no bear, because there ain't no toenails, and it's bigger than any bear we got in this country.' They thought maybe it might be a grizzly or something, but it was still bigger than a grizzly and there wasn't no toenail marks."

Sumerlin is pictured in the tour guide book, seated in front of the life-sized cutout of a Bigfoot he'd nailed to the side of his house at 1333 Dell St. in Walla Walla, and he is holding two plaster casts he had made of Bigfoot tracks he'd come across.... two of the many thousands he had seen over many years in the Blue Mountains.

Wes Sumerlin was one of the premier trackers in these parts, be it animals or humans. He led more than one successful manhunt in his younger days and used a team of well-trained sled dogs on some missions.

It was with Wes as my tutor that I learned the small bit of tracking knowledge I have. I have watched him on several occasions as he determined facts from a human-like footprint measuring 16 inches or longer. From his scrutiny and often at ground level, he'd determine how long ago the track had been made. And, of course he knew almost at a glance whether it was a hoaxed track or not.

"These are real, alright," he'd pronounce. "They are alive."

He meant, of course, that something living had made the tracks and not some human pushing a carved foot into the soil.

Being part Indian and having been reared his early years on the Colville Reservation, Wes came pretty natural and easily to the tracking stuff. But, he became as versed as any I can think of. His brother, Swede Sumerlin, is probably a match as they learned the art side by side and followed it here, running trap lines and the like. It was Wes and Swede who followed the 1992 Bigfoot tracks back up from the Mill Creek Road for several miles into the mountains before losing them in brush and rocks.

Many people over the years would "check in" with Wes Sumerlin when they heard about or saw evidence of a Bigfoot in the mountains. People who had never talked to him before would show up to tell their stories of things ranging from huge "human-looking" foot prints to having seen a Bigfoot itself. This was something which continued practically right up to his death. And, when people called at the Sumerlin home on Dell Avenue, several pots of coffee sometimes disappeared during the visit. Wes and his wife Peewee always had an ample supply brewing in their kitchen.

The Sumerlin home over the years was a mecca for many, especially those who sought to learn more about this Bigfoot thing! Several television companies, two from Japan, came there to film while interviewing Wes for documentaries on the subject.

Tracking down the Bigfoot story of the Blue Mountains will not be the same without Wes Sumerlin.

I'm sure I'm part of a small 'army' of Bigfoot researchers who feel the same way!

Vance Orchard

Foreword

It is the responsibility of science to investigate, examine, test and question. Should the question of Bigfoot (Sasquatch) be any less worthy a subject for Science? Is there any scientific reason that a large ape couldn't live in the Pacific Northwest, and is there any reason that the Blue Mountains of Washington State couldn't provide harbor for such an animal?

Surprisingly, it wasn't until 1996, that credentialed scientists, on their own, found evidence of this elusive crypted. For four years previous, scientists had only been given, shown, lead to, or told of such evidences. Further, how ironic it is, that the very disciplines intrusted with this objective, steered clear of the question and those few scientists who honored their scientific commitments, are castigated and ridiculed by their peers for simply following their committal.

In this book, you will hear from one such scientist, D. Jeffrey Meldrum, Ph.D. Professor of Primate Anatomy, Department of Bidogical Science, Idaho State University. He is of rare character, keeping his commitment to science and his moral precepts, at times in the face of peer pressure to do otherwise. He has been a steward of scholarship, making new inroads into the subject and "going where no scientist has gone before" Others like, W. Henner Fahrenback Ph.D., Grover Krantz, Ph.D., and John Bindernagel Ph.D. are and have been faithful to this charge, and all have one thing in common. They have seen, examined and heard to much to turn back now!

This book, "WALLA WALLA BIGFOOT," will endeavor to show and share some of this truth!

Dr. Ron Brown

Section One

The 1993 book "Bigfoot of the Blues" re-visited

A History of the Bigfoot in the Blue Mountains Near Walla Walla During the Past Century

For the newcomers to the story of the Walla Walla Bigfoot, here's a little local Bigfoot history and a revisiting of some of the major Bigfoot reports from the 1993 book, "Bigfoot of the Blues."

Nearly every region on earth has legends of a mysterious 'hairy biped' that inhabits wilderness areas. The best known of these are the 'Himalayan Yeti', or 'Abominable Snowman', and the 'Sasquatch' or 'Bigfoot', of Canada and the Northwest and the 'Yowie of Australia'. Here is a brief history of the Bigfoot we call 'The Walla Walla Bigfoot'.

Over the years, thousands of people have claimed to have seen these upright-walking, bipedal creatures. More rarely, their footprints reportedly have been found, or their pictures taken.

During the 1970s, a Canadian newspaperman and author, John Green, studied 1,000 reported sightings of Sasquatch. What he discovered was a consistent picture of an upright, manlike being .... a remarkably inoffensive creature that is solitary, omnivorous, largely nocturnal, forest-dwelling and much larger than humans.

To keep things in perspective a bit and to cite evidence of the longevity of Bigfoot around the Northwest, I like to tell a story concerning a well known native son of Walla Walla, the sculptor Dave Manuel.

A few years ago our family was visiting the Manuel museum in Joseph, Oregon. It was while chatting with Dave that another Walla Walla visitor burst upon us, coming down from the upper level of the museum. Knowing my interest in Bigfoot, she pounced on me with the announcement that I should "see the Bigfoot upstairs."

Dave offered to take me up and show the sculpture, but he promised more: "I have a story that's even better."

Upstairs and near a table was a statue which obviously marked

the Manuel craft, a real outdoors effort this one! There, reared on hind legs was a huge bear in a threatening manner. But, reared up equally tall was a Bigfoot, holding up a boulder and about to pound it onto the bear! Dave said he had made this piece early in his career .... his second statue, if memory serves me .... and was showing it at an art exhibit at Hood River, Oregon, in the mid-70s. And here was the story.

Dave said he had noticed that most of the day he had seen an Indian man standing near the statue, closely observing its every detail. Then, at the close of the day, the man left. But, the next day, he had returned, but with some friends and bearing a gift for Manuel.

The gift of the Indians was an honor bestowed by them for unusual contribution to the tribe, the men told Dave in response to his questions. But why? he further wanted to know.

"Because in your statue you have so faithfully captured the truth behind an important feature of our lore, which has been handed down for generations among our people," he was told.

So .... Bigfoot apparently has been around here for a time.

My interest in the Bigfoot and the Bigfoot of the Blue Mountains in particular came in 1966 when I wrote a story for the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin about the experience of a Walla Walla man who reported seeing huge manlike footprints while on a motorcycle ride up Mill Creek Road.

That interest in Bigfoot got a major upswing in 1982 when a U. S. Forest Service patrol rider reported he had encountered one of the creatures while walking on an abandoned logging road near the Mill Creek Watershed boundary a few miles from Walla Walla. That man was Paul Freeman, whose name became practically a household word in NW Bigfoot circles in a very short time. I first met Freeman when I interviewed him at the Forest Service office right after the encounter.

In that interview Freeman said the big creature he'd seen was covered with reddish-brown hair, except for the face, the palms of its hands and the soles of its feet. He said he could easily hear the sound of its footsteps as the Bigfoot turned to leave the scene ....

"I thought it was going to come at me when I first saw it coming down the bank because the hair on its neck and head just went forward like the hair will on a dog's back, "Freeman recounted ...."it did that three times, then it just turned and started walking down the road, looking back at me once in awhile."

"There's no way a person could put asuit on and make that kind of stride .... the big feet measured 64 inches apart .... I tried it and the best I could do was 48 inches."

Freeman, by the way is a big man, going some 300 pounds and six feet, five inches tall. On more than one occasion, I've seen him stand alongside a set of 16- to 18-inch tracks which were sunk two inches into the soil. Freeman's tracks would be no more than a quarter inch deep!

How Freeman described the Bigfoot he saw in 1982 is quite similar to how others have seen it .... varying only in color of hair, size of foot print, sex or height of the animals themselves.

While this "Very Close Encounter" by the watershed patrol rider was exciting and was to prove only the beginning for the next 10-15 years, it was not the first sighting of this elusive creature in the Blue Mountains. Here are reports of the animal that I have gleaned over the years I have been researching this so very interesting Blue Mountains story.

My earliest record of a Bigfoot sighting .... and this one was probably from a shorter distance than was Freeman's .... came in 1900 at Huntsville, Wa. Now sort of a 'ghost town' between Waitsburg and Dayton, on U.S. Highway 12, in 1900 it boasted a promising town with a flour mill. The grandparents of Gordon Bateman of Walla Walla had come West to buy the mill at that time and their house set right near the present U. S. Highway 12 and then alongside the mill. The mill and home structures have been torn down in recent years.

Bateman's grandmother was a girl of 12 when one day she went out the back door of the house to go to the garden. She had gone but a few steps when she spotted the huge, furry creature at the back gate. The Bigfoot seemed as startled as the girl, turning to run back toward the nearby Touchet River and the Blue Mountains foothills. The girl likewise, turned and ran pell-mell back to the house.

When I wrote this story a few years ago, Gordon mailed a clipping of it to an aunt back East. The aunt, then in her 90s, verified the story, recalling how the family had often talked about the incident.

Jumping ahead a couple of decades we come to the 1920s and for me, one of the most fascinating stories of Bigfoot in the Blues .... when a homesteader's family "lived right among them."

In February, 1995, a long line of tracks, one large step and two a bit smaller and indicating three Bigfoots, was found in an open field from the Scenic Loop Road to the Meiners Road above Mill Creek Road. Mill Creek Road, beginning at the Walla Walla outskirts, takes one deep into the nearby Blue Mountains, following Mill Creek, a tributary of the Walla Walla River. The tracks had come from an area up Mill Creek where helicopter logging was in progress. This activity possibly disturbed the "family" of Bigfoots, it has been theorized by local trackers.

At any rate, when I wrote this story in my (Waitsburg, WA) "Times" column, a got a phone call from my neighbor, Freda Lane. She told me the account reminded her of homesteading days on the upper Coppei Creek, a tributary of the Touchet River. She said her family and several other homesteaders also had experienced the Bigfoot family. She told me she was 13 when her father recounted his first encounter.

"My father told me one day he was looking across to an open hillside on which rested a huge white old log. There, he said he saw the "biggest, strangest bear ever" walking out of the brush .... two others followed and then all went to the log and sat on it, then went to tearing it apart and had their lunch (of grubs), then went off down the trail. My father made me promise not to tell my mother about this incident," Freda closed.

Freda's mother was to have her very own encounter, though! This came when her mother sought to locate the family's little herd of six milk cows. She finally tracked them down, only to see they were being watched over by a smallish Bigfoot! Freda's account continues:

"Mother said she looked at the Bigfoot and it looked at her. She was scared but ran after the cows and she and the cows all ran toward the homestead. Mother always said the Bigfoot was just a caveman, but he was dressed up in furs and really needed a bath!"

The strong odor is a usual part of any Bigfoot sighting, by the way.

Moving forward chronologically and we come to 1940 and a new employee of the Walla Walla District of the Umatilla National Forest has been assigned to lookout duty. He is the late Jim Ralph, who made his home in Milton-Freewater. While he manned the lookout

tower during the daytime hours. Jim's sleeping quarters was a log cabin at the base of the tower. One morning he came out to find fresh .... and huge! .... human-like footprints outside the cabin, toes pointed toward the window. He told me he had had the feeling during the night of "something or somebody looking at him ."

Jim told me he followed the tracks which left the cabin for a mile or two but had to get back to his lookout tower. Although he covered the track with a wash tub and showed them to his superior, no report was ever made of the incident as far as he knows.

In the years following World War II the family of Wes and Natalie (Peewee) Sumerlin of Walla Walla enjoyed their family camping outings in the Blue Mountains. The family saw not only tracks but had their share of close encounters, too. But, the family always accepted the Bigfoot as "just a part of the woods, same as a bear or cougar might be ...." Wes (he died in early 1999) was well known around here for his knowledge of the nearby Blues .... he hunted and trapped and packed for elk hunters for many years. As trackers of humans or animals, Wes and his brother, Swede Sumerlin, both part Indian, had no equal in the mountains.

It was Wes who shared and exciting Bigfoot sighting with retired game warden Bill Laughery, a Dayton native son. This came on a trip to an area above Dixie in August, 1995. Paul Freeman was with Bill and Wes, but got separated when Bill and Wes encountered a Bigfoot at less than 100 feet away. Admittedly it was the briefest of encounters but it was a testimony to the quickness of movement possessed by the creature.

It was at this site that Wes and Bill picked from bushes some hair which was sent off for DNA analysis. After more than a year, this apparently went down the dead-end trail of so many other scientific looks at the Bigfoot matter. The hair is never pinned down other than it must be from an unknown primate.

Bigfoot was the topic as Kevin Lindley, bigfoot researcher, met with Wes Sumerlin (center) and Paul Freeman (right)

Man examines example of tree-twisting oddity of forests.

Vance Orchard holds plaster casts of hand & foot from the same Bigfoot..

Why Have the Blue Mountains Seen So Much Bigfoot Activity?

Consider the topography ....

The Mill Creek Watershed, set aside in 1918 for the City of Walla Walla, it sets astride the Oregon-Washington border of SE Washington and NE Oregon. Patrol riders are on duty to prevent entry by humans or livestock. With the scarcity of humans and its lying adjacent to the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness Area, this makes a very logical "home base" for the Walla Walla Bigfoot.

The Blue Mountains run diagonally from SE Washington through eastern Oregon. While not known for its high, towering peaks (7,000 feet is tops) this ancient range is best known for its thick stands of timber and deep canyons .... and superb elk hunting! Many deer also are found in both high and low areas of these mountains and foothills.

Straddling the Oregon-Washington line is the 176,000-acre Mill Creek Watershed. This area was set aside in 1918 by the federal government for a prime water supply for the City of Walla Walla.

Humans and their livestock are kept out. A short elk season is permitted for Oregon and Washington hunters on a rigid, permits-only basis.

In 1978 the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness Area was created on several thousand acres right alongside the Watershed. This stretches for some 25 air miles to the east or near the road from Pomeroy to Troy, Oregon. All is within the Umatilla National Forest. With restricted usage by humans, because of its Wilderness status, this total area represents a huge Bigfoot potential residence, a sizable space seldom visited in any numbers by humans.

Its ability to avoid humans doubtless is a reason for its having eluded people and/or extinction. Having a people-free area like the wilderness area and watershed gives this animal a perfect base to maintain its elusiveness.

Which I hope continues .... whether or not we ever get more proof of its existence.

In my previous book about the Walla Walla Bigfoot ('Bigfoot of the Blues') I recounted the stories which came during the 1982-1992 period and the trials his reporting his first sighting meant to Paul Freeman and his family. Those details included how Freeman ended his 10-year chase of a Bigfoot in order that he could vindicate his initial encounter to those who had expressed doubt of his meeting a Bigfoot. The book closes with Freeman's description as he feared he was about to be battered by two Bigfoots .... to the point he believed they had spared his life if he would desist from pursuing them!

That final encounter is but one of many incidents recorded in the book. I'd like to briefly mention some others covered within the pages of 'Bigfoot of the Blues,' all of which help solidify beliefs that here, in the Walla Walla region of the northern Blue Mountains, is truly the prime Bigfoot region of the Northwest.

Starting with the search-rescue party which went directly to the scene of the June, 1982, sighting by Freeman, there are numerous incidents about Bigfoot in this region. The party was made up of Milton-Freewater, Or., members of the Umatilla County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Team. The Bigfoot encounter by Freeman was just inside the Oregon (Umatilla County) line. Milton-Freewater is 10 miles from Walla Walla.

After spending several hours on the scene .... and before hundreds of curiosity seekers obliterated most trackage over the

weekend .... the team was fully convinced that Freeman had indeed seen something unusual. Art Snow, a leader of the team, declared, "we have no reason in the world to doubt Paul Freeman's story. In fact, we couldn't think of any way he could possibly have faked it. We saw no evidence that we could dispute him."

Snow further expounded on what he and his special team had learned at the scene of Freeman's encounter. He said he had developed some highly interesting conjecture about the many huge, humanoid tracks at the scene. His estimate is that the creature weighed between 650 and 700 pounds.

"To make those tracks we saw going down that road (from the point of the encounter) you'd have to put 650 vertical pounds of pressure on the ground to make them in the sail as we found it." Snow said.

"Now, how do you move 650 pounds of weight down the road and make those tracks and only have those tracks showing in the road?" He asked.

"You could do it with a helicopter, but no other way."

A week following the first Freeman Bigfoot encounter, Freeman and a fellow Forest Service patrol rider, were on a trail a short distance from that encounter when they came across more Bigfoot tracks. When they filed another Bigfoot report, the Forest Service hired a professional tracker by name of Joel Hardin to check out this second set of tracks.

Although Hardin's report cited the trackers belief the tracks were a hoax there were a couple of points which need to be mentioned in refutation. Wayne Long, the spokesman for the Forest Service during the whole Bigfoot matter of 1982, had an acute observation which apparently escaped many during the Hardin investigation.

Long pointed out that while one cast of a Bigfoot print showed what appeared to be a rock wedged between two toes, spreading the digits, other prints did not show the rock.

Long again was quoted in a news story a month later, when I asked him about some prominent Bigfoot researchers who had made their way to the scene of the first Freeman encounter. These were two of the leading figures in the Bigfoot matter, John Green and Bob Titmus. Long told me he had talked at length with both Green and Titmus.

"They obviously came here to examine the Bigfoot issue, not

pro- or anti-Bigfoot, just came here to examine the material and to ask questions," Long said. "Both had seen hoaxes before about the Bigfoot thing. They both talked to Freeman and both seemed to think Freeman truly had seen something."

Just a month following his first encounter, there was further vindication that the patrol rider had truly seen something. It came during a fishing party on a stream or two that got little action, one reason being they are within the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness Area. The angling party, headed by Freeman's boss at the time, Allen Mitchell, also included Freeman. The party rode their horses down the South Fork Wenaha and made camp at the mouth of Milk Creek.

The next morning Mitchell and Mike Evans took a ride up nearby Shoofly Creek. About a mile up that stream, Mitchell, a non-believer in the Bigfoot matter, suddenly became an ardent believer! He and Evans came across scores of big footprints .... three different sizes in the lot .... that he swore could not have been faked. He further advised Evans: "Don't disturb anything, Freeman hasn't been up here yet."

Mitchell said he guessed the maker of the big tracks had to be fair sized.

"As near as I could figure, the Bigfoot would have to be right at six feet high at the crotch and would have to weigh around 1,200 pounds to sink into the mud as deep as those prints were," Mitchell said.

"My horse weighs around 1,200 pounds and I walked him through the mud and he didn't sink as deep as those feet did. We found tracks all over the place for a quarter of a mile, including three different sets, and one was a cripple-footed one."

Ten years and two months after his 1982 encounter with a Bigfoot, Freeman had another set-to with two Bigfoots and this supposedly brought the 10-year tour of vindication to a close for the big man. This encounter is related in the closing pages of 'Bigfoot of the Blues' as part of a lengthy interview I had with Freeman a day or two afterward.

Freeman said he had gone to a favorite Bigfoot sighting area, Deduct Pond, when he spotted not one Bigfoot, but two of them. He followed them when they took off, shooting footage with his camcorder

as he could. He lost them momentarily but then he could hear them nearby, making a lot of noises and an odd whistling sound with a loud popping with it and wheezing .... real good and loud and close. "I got real scared and upset then."

Freeman says he scuttled down under the roots of a fallen tree to hide and for protection from what he feared then as pending death at the hands of the creatures. When the creatures finally calmed down and apparently left, Freeman crept out of hiding and made his way to his car and "got the heck out of there."

Freeman said he had never feared being in the woods alone, dating back to when he ran a fur-trapping line as a boy. But he says he changed after the encounter near Deduct pond.

"These things warned me," he said, "leave'em alone, don't press your luck."

Among other questions put to Freeman in that interview, I asked him if there had not been some measure of satisfaction in his 10-year vindication search to prove there was such a thing as a Bigfoot as he claimed in June of 1982.

"I don't know," Freeman responded, "but I do know that I sure don't have to prove anything to anyone." "I know what's up there ..... I know what I've seen."

But, He Came Back to Renew the Bigfoot Hunt

Warnings or not, Paul Freeman returned to the hunt! I once more interviewed him to get his reasons for coming back since he had been so adamant about giving up the hunt three years before. Following is my last interview with Paul Freeman and his 'parting shot' at the skeptics and others who have scoffed at his story, first told following his report in 1982.

(Nov. 30, 1995) --- He was a very determined man...determined he'd never again go into the mountains looking for Bigfoot.

Paul Freeman was also a pretty shaken person that day in 1992, a day after he'd been pinned down by some Bigfoots. He figured at the time he'd been given a warning from the creatures, something like: "Back off ... don't crowd us!"

The Bigfoots had Freeman cowering "under a blow-down (tree) stump ... over the ridge in a little canyon a short ways from Deduct Springs," from where he had followed their tracks, he recalled the other day.

And yes, Freeman also remembered the other day that in 1992 he had sworn he was not going after Bigfoot again.

So, why, in the past year or so, has he been seen and heard from in connection with a lot of Bigfoot trackage and most recently the sighting of one to three of the creatures?

While the answer he gives is simplicity itself, there is a feeling that it isn't quite that simple.

He says he has been in the hills seeking Bigfoot again because of the attraction for the subject. "It's just like hunting or fishing," he says.

"You get hooked on it."

Then, Freeman adds:

"I've been called a liar on this (Bigfoot subject) so many times ... "But, I feel sure it's going to turn out to be a whole new species." Maybe those last words are the key... is that what has driven

him over the years and maybe especially since 1992 when he was pinned down by the Bigfoots?

"Yes, that's a lot of it," Freeman says. "I just want to prove it exists." I reminded Freeman that he'd told me right after his 1982 close encounter with a Bigfoot: "I know what I saw and I'm going to prove it."

Maybe that's the way it was then and all during the time since, right up to the present, in spite of the "warning" from the Bigfoots?

I asked Freeman about his being figuratively grabbed by the throat by the Bigfoot phenomena and his resolve to "get" one. In the conversation there might be a hint as to the "spur" powering his resolve to "pin one down" on his own.

Talking about those days immediately following his encounter with a Bigfoot and how he lost his Forest Service job because of it, Freeman said:"Yeah, the Forest Service looks at you and calls you a liar and asks if you're drinking on the job? Then, they want you to shut up about it and you can't go up there on your days off even ... said I'd lose my job ... and, I did, too."

Freeman also recalled how that summer of '82 that the Forest Service officials in Walla Walla made a determination to wait until the end of the fall hunting season and see if the hundreds of elk hunters would report any Bigfoots. No Bigfoots were reported, though, and the official interest died out, he also recalled.

Then he alluded to the August 1995 sighting at the head of Dry Creek some 20 miles or so from Walla Walla.

"The last time we saw one was when Wes (Sumerlin) and Bill (Laughery) and I all three of us saw one ... we must all be liars, hey? "As well as thousands of others who say they have seen a Bigfoot. People just don't want to believe it exists. They don't want to believe it and they don't believe what they don't see."

But, Paul Freeman has been a solid believer ... ever since that day in June in 1982 and especially since that day in 1992 near Deduct Spring when he was forced to hide for protection from some Bigfoots. But, like a little kid when he catches his first fish, he, as well as the trout, "got hooked and good," Freeman says.

The aging process (he has been involved with Bigfoot searching for more than a decade now) and a severe foot injury several years ago, have combined to slow down the big man. However, he has been on an exercise regimen at the gym and says he has lost 25 pounds this year. So, maybe he just wants to be in shape in case there's a Bigfoot report?

While the seasonal work is dwindling, Freeman has been employed as a truck driver by Ferguson Cattle Co. the past year. He has also been active in writing a book about his trials and tribulations with the Bigfoot of the Blue Mountains. A video presentation of the same subject is also in the works, he says. Both book and video should be ready about the same time, but no publishing date was given.

Bigfoot has been in the local and national news of late. Most recently there was the news story in the local paper about hairs being given DNA testing. The hair was found in the vicinity of the Bigfoot encounter in August by Freeman, Sumerlin and Laughery. First indications of the testing are that the hair does not come from a primate, according to the story.

Sumerlin, an old line Bigfoot spotter for many years in the Blue Mountains, is certain the testing could reveal the existence of a Bigfoot.

Freeman is too, and is highly hopeful the tests will reveal the existence of a "whole new species," for that matter.

A matter of interest and a thread which runs through a lot of the Bigfoot discussions is the supposed lack of reporting by hunters of the Blue Mountains. The question usually goes like this: "With all the hunters in the mountains here, how come we never hear anything from them?"

Freeman says this isn't correct; many reports have come to him and to others like Sumerlin and Laughery, to name a couple.

A lot of the research done by Freeman over the years has been as the result of tips from hunters, anglers or outdoors people, he says. The August encounter was the result of a report from some bow hunters that they had seen "an awful lot of tracks and torn up stumps."

When Freeman, Sumerlin and Laughery went to investigate, they ran into possibly three Bigfoots. That many different sets of tracks were found in the vicinity. Of interest to Freeman and other local Bigfoot aficionados was the August issue of 'Fate Magazine'. In the magazine, columnist Mark Chorvinsky expounded on the possible fakery of tracks of Bigfoot on the west Coast . He said:

"After a tremendous amount of research and investigation, I am prepared to state categorically that the case for a West Coast Bigfoot is now so seriously tainted that there is a real question as to whether there is or ever was a West Coast Bigfoot. All evidence points toward the West Coast Bigfoot as a folkloric/cultural phenomenon, driven by a steady stream of hoaxes over a period of decades."

In response, Freeman said: "The guy doesn't know what he's talking about, but I guess he's left himself a hole so he can crawl back out of it if he has to."

Some other Bigfoot seekers in the Blue Mountains area held a similar view of the article.

In a recent U-B column by Don Davis there was a similar vein of disbelief as well. In his closing remarks in that August 16 column, Davis opines: "Well, maybe Bigfoot exists. And, yes, maybe Paul Freeman has seen the creature. But I doubt it. Actually, I don't believe it."

While noting that he had enjoyed the article, Freeman had this comment: "Everybody has their own opinion. Three of us saw the same thing, so what he believes doesn't make any difference to me. I think he had some calls on that column, though. He can believe what he wants to believe .

"We've got tons of evidence here, you know. " About the whole subject of the skeptics of Bigfoot's existence, Freeman re-iterates what I've heard so often: "I know what I saw." Then, he adds:

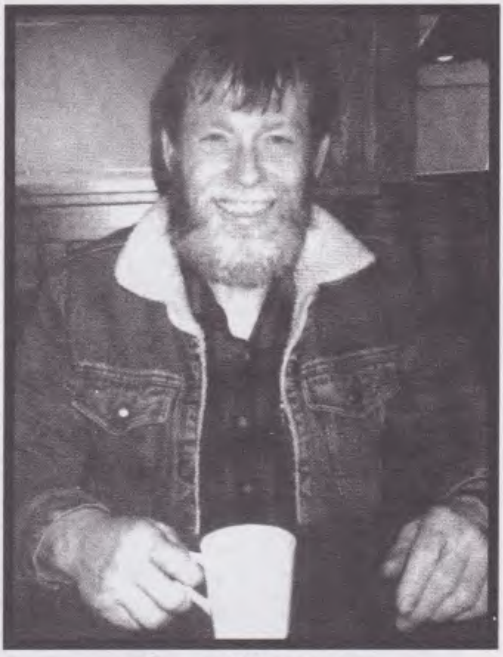
"I've been listening to their BS for 15 years, but I know better and they can't take any of that away from me."

Northwest Tracker Evaluates The Walla Walla Bigfoot

There might have been a thought in the back of Roger Thornton's mind that some day he'd run into a Bigfoot when he and wife decided on the primitive lifestyle of the Blue Mountains.

After all, this was prime Bigfoot country, wasn't it?

That it is and the Bigfoot saga was soon coming to the Thorntons not long after they took up residence some 15 miles above Waitsburg on the upper limits of Coppei Creek.



Roger Thornton

That's UPPER as in capital letters, what with a couple of fordings of the stream needed before reaching their cabin!

Thornton had got his "baptism" of seeking for this Bigfoot creature some 30 years ago when he was part of a sizable expedition out of Skamania, Wash. As Thornton recalls, a Californian by name of Noah Fredericks put together the party of nine over-sized motor homes, photographers and a wide range of electronic gear, spending a fortune in the process. All to get some film footage of a Bigfoot.

With the leader's "fortune" down the drain, the expedition ground to a halt, sans any Bigfoot pictures, Thornton says.

Well, in the interlude, Thornton, a man highly skilled in crafting the finest hunting knives or a sword to your specs, never lost that yen to find a Bigfoot. Along the way, the man has amassed a head full of knowledge about the creature and its ways and the skills of tracking it and other animals.

That's the background for the guy who a few months after arriving in the Blue Mountains, scanned The Times one day in January, 1991, to see news in this column about the thing he sought. It was the story (with photos) of the miles of Bigfoot tracks that Paul Freeman, Wes Sumerlin and I had found coming down from the hills near the Seven Mile Road area on Mill Creek.

"I would never have known about them if I hadn't seen the story in The Times," Thornton says. "And, the tracks were just over the hill from our cabin!"

Thornton thoroughly scouted out the tracks of '91 which came out of the brush near Five Points, wandered about that vicinity (snow in patches here and there) before they went on down to Mill Creek, then back to the hills via Blue Creek.

"I would never have known about them if I hadn't seen the story in The Times,

" Thornton says. "And, the tracks were just over the hill from our cabin!"

Thornton thoroughly scouted out the tracks of '91 which came out of the brush near Five Points, wandered about that vicinity (snow in patches here and there) before they went on down to Mill Creek, then back to the hills via Blue Creek.

Thornton is the guy who found evidence of the animal's having gone back to the mountains.

Those of us who found the tracks never did that much tracking or never went back up as far as Blue Creek.

Needless to say, when we again found Bigfoot tracks a couple of months ago and again in the Five Points-to-Coyote Road area, Thornton was right there on the spot.

And by then, he'd made our acquaintance and was part of the informal group here which shares knowledge of sightings and rumors of sightings of this elusive creature.

Thornton, as do Sumerlin and Freeman, feels the tracks of 1991 and 1992 were made by two different animals, however.

Then, after the Coyote Road tracks had been thoroughly scouted out by Thornton and the rest of us, he and Freeman were to locate an even more exciting find a few days later. This was on Blacksnake Ridge, several miles above Five Points, in snow. Some muzzleloader elk hunters had gone up the road then came back two hours later, stopping to chat with Freeman and Thornton.

"Paul told them where he had seen some elk the day before.

This 15 inch track was one of several miles of Bigfoot tracks researched in January, 1991 about eight miles east of Walla Walla. The ground was frozen when these were made, probably the night before. The photograph taken near noon on January 14, 1991. Feet of a 200 pound man made no indentation.

Then one of the guys, said: 'By the way, we saw some big bear tracks back there aways. They were real big, too.'

"Well, Paul and I went up there and found the tracks, all right, but they sure weren't bear tracks, they were Bigfoot tracks."

Thornton notes that bear tracks rarely exceed 12 inches and of course come with a set of claws where toes would be.

And that area is where Thornton and Freeman found "just all kinds of tracks, all over the place" and evidence of something having torn up the piles of logging slash to get at rodents.

It was here they found a hand print (which has been pictured in The Times).

Finding the hand print was the Bigfoot deal of the year for Thornton. He has seen thousands of footprints of the creature but had before seen only a cast of one in the Oregon Museum of Natural History.

How do the tracks here compare with those he has seen around Skamania and elsewhere?

"I've seen far more tracks here and over a longer stretch of distance than down at Skamania," he replies. "Down there you'd get to see a few tracks for a short distance (50-60 feet) but here we have seen them go on for miles.

"I've gotten to see more tracks here than I thought I'd ever see."

Of the many big footprints Thornton has seen, he feels a good share were faked, at least those over near Skamania and elsewhere in the Cascades. He and a party of Bigfoot searchers even ran down a man who was busy faking tracks, by using a mallet to pound a fake foot into the dirt as he walked along on snowshoes covered with burlap.

Thornton says he and his party were long aware of the faking. "No matter how clever a faker is at making the tracks, a good tracker can tell if the tracks are alive or not." It was at Skamania, however, that Thornton saw the biggest footprint.

"That thing was 22 inches long and six inches wide and real deep into the soil. The animal that made that track must have weighed around a thousand pounds. "Just standing there , looking down at the track made the hair come up on my neck."

Thornton says he feels sorry for people who don't believe in the Bigfoot creature.

Is there a "cure" for this?

"Sure, just invite people to come up and look at the next set of tracks we find, like these of this year and last. Then, educate them as to

what they are looking at ... let them see the different impressions of the tracks and the inflections in them and explain what all that means ... so they can envision what that animal is like as it stood there to make the track.

"Then, I think you'd change people's minds.

"Let them see what we've seen and they'd be believers."

Thornton has a response to the query I hear maybe more than any other about the Bigfoot matter: "If there is a Bigfoot why don't people see them?"

"A lot of people have seen the thing and a lot of people have seen one and don't know what they've seen."

Two Quotations Made Back in 1982 Prove Good Freeman Defense in Hoaxing Charges

Two quotations from an employee of the U.S. Forest Service at the time of the 1982 Bigfoot sightings reported by the Forest Service patrol rider, Paul Freeman, are worthy of scrutiny today.

Following the June 10, 1982, sighting reported by Freeman, Wayne Long, spokesman for the Forest Service on the issue, observed that while one cast of a Bigfoot print showed what appeared to be a rock wedged between two toes, spreading them, other prints did not show the rock.

"A fake foot, made of wood, say, would be rigid and the same print, step after step," he added.

This was a quote cited in a Union-Bulletin outdoors column of June 13, 1982, written by Vance Orchard.

Less than a month later, in Orchard's July 4, 1982, outdoors column, there appeared another interesting quotation by Long. This comment came when Long related his visiting with Bigfoot investigators John Green and Bob Titmus, while the two were in Walla Walla checking out the Freeman sighting. In his July 4 column, Orchard said Long talked at length with Green and Titmus. Long spoke highly of the objectivity of the two men.

"They obviously came here to examine the Bigfoot issue, not pro- or anti-Bigfoot," Long said, "just came here to examine the material and to ask questions. Both men had seen hoaxes before about the Bigfoot thing. They both talked to Freeman and both seemed to think Freeman truly had seen something."

Review of "Bigfoot of the Blues" Book Revised Some Thinking

"Bigfoot of the Blues" was an honest and earnest attempt to tell the story of this 10-year saga and more concerning the regional aspects. Strong evidence we had succeeded was revealed in the solidly in-depth review of the book written by Dr. Jeffrey Meldrum and published in (and with permission of) the Journal of the International Society of Cryptozoology. I would like to enter it at this point into the evidence being presented for the 'Walla Walla Country Bigfoot.' --- V.O.

In November of 1995 Richard Greenwell handed me a copy of 'Bigfoot of the Blues.' as we flew from San Francisco to Eureka, California on our way to investigate the Redwoods video site. During lulls in the conversation I paged-through the book. I was initially intrigued by what I did not find.

Surprisingly, there were no illustrations, no photos of footprints, no casts, no persons straining to match step length, no sketchy eyewitness renderings. There were few or no obligatory speculations about Gigantopithecus, migratory routes or extraordinary senses or physical prowess. Instead, there was a narrative, focusing on events in the Blue Mountains of southeastern Washington State spanning a ten-year period between 1982 and 1992. Occasional forays were made in time and space to lend context and continuity to the story line. But always the thread returned to the Blues and the activities of a band of witnesses, perhaps most prominent among them Paul Freeman and [the late] Wes Sumerlin.

Vance Orchard is a journalist having covered the region for the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin for some 40 years and for the Waitsburg Times since then. His interest in Bigfoot was kindled in 1966 when reporting on the discovery of big human-like tracks up Mill Creek

Road. The book strings together a number of his outdoor columns that featured regional developments in the bigfoot saga. He presents the facts in a no-nonsense, matter of fact style with an amiable countrified tone that lends personality to otherwise obscure names, places and events.

It seems to me the only way to evaluate the merits of such a narrative was to gain a better appreciation of the people and events myself There was no shortage of individuals eager to enlighten me about the character of Paul Freeman and incredibility of the Walla Walla evidence. Freeman had achieved notoriety in 1982, when he claimed to have encountered a bigfoot on the border of the Mill Creek watershed. The events that ensued focused national attention on the region. Dr. Grover Krantz, of the Department of Anthropology at Washington State University described the appearance of dermatoglyphics in the footprint cast, but received a cool reception from both the scientific and bigfoot communities. Joel Hardin, an acclaimed U.S. Border Patrol tracker pronounced the 1982 tracts to be fakes. Later in 1984, Rene Dahinden, a life long Bigfoot investigator, examined a trackway and declared it hoaxed. Then, in 1989, Edward B. Winn "surreptitiously" removed fibers from a twisted tree branch presented by Freeman at the 1989 Membership Meeting of the International Society of Cryptozoology and tested them for chemical composition and melting point. He later concluded that the fibers were a synthetic modacrylic fiber and he labeled the entire presentation as "scientific vandalism" (Edward B. Winn, 1991 Physical and Morphological Analysis of Samples of Fiber Purported to be Sasquatch Hair, Cryptozoology, Vol. 10: 55-65) Others promptly hopped aboard the bandwagon.

I first contacted Vance Orchard in late 1995, after my first read of "Bigfoot of the Blues." He was very friendly and candid, providing me shortly there after with a long list of names, addresses and phone numbers and copies of his original column and related materials. I was impressed by his even-handed representation of the personalities and events. He was genuinely interested in the negative reports that had escaped his attention and more than willing to weigh them in the balance.

Orchard immediately laid to rest the assertion that there was no Bigfoot in the Blue Mountains until Paul Freeman arrived on the scene in 1982, recounting incidents dating back to 1900. Frequent reports of witnesses not connected with Freeman's involvement further

contradicted such allegations. For example, incidents were reported to the U.S. Forest Service in the late 1960's as described by USFS employee Wayne Long. This was further corroborated by additional reports from the files of John Green and from the newly-formed North American Science Institute (NASI) of incidents throughout the Blue Mountains in both Washington and Oregon.

On February 18, 1996, I paid an unannounced visit to Paul Freeman who, after persistent questioning about the footprints, confided that he had located the first tracks of that spring that very morning. Too coincidental? I thought so until I examined the string of prints, numbering in excess of 40. They measured nearly 14 inches (35cm) in length. The ground was wet from recent rains that continued sporadically over the weekend. The last fleeting traces of dermatoglyphics were still visible in some tracks indicating they had likely been laid down the previous night. Variations in toe position, indications of mid-foot flexibility and dynamic interactions with the varying soil conditions were clearly evident. In one print, the splaying toes pressed the first and fifth toes into sidewalls of the deep impressions, producing profiles of the respective digits - - to my knowledge, the first time this had been documented. I personally cast seven footprints; further details will be the subject of a separate report. These tracks gave every indication being "alive" as Vance Orchard puts it. Suffice it to say the incident spurred me on to further investigation.

During subsequent visits to Walla Walla, I examined and documented Wes Sumerlin's and Paul Freeman's cast collections and interviewed them at great length, hearing first hand many of the stories recounted in the book "Bigfoot of the Blues." I eventually arranged for the procurement of the entire Freeman case collection, which is now on loan in my laboratory for further analysis and is accessible for the study to any seriously interested party. I have personally visited with or spoken to many of the personalities discussed by Orchard: Paul Freeman, Wes and Peewee Sumerlin, Swede Sumerlin, Phil Farnes, Bill Laughery, Dick Cockle and Kevin Lindley. I have encountered no discrepancies in the recounting of events by Orchard. In fact, with the second, more informed reading of his book, I was even more impressed by his succinct and incisive style of reporting.

However, in the penultimate chapter (chapter 14), Orchard undertakes an indulgent rambling through the dim corridors of the purported paranormal aspects of Bigfoot and explores a possible UFO connection. This chapter is decidedly out of character by comparison to

the foregoing chapters. It begins with an account related by Sumerlin that draws a tenuous connection between "lost time" experience and a subsequent sighting of Bigfoot. From there, Orchard ranges far afield beyond the bounds of the Blue Mountains, citing incidents from the pages of the Bigfoot CO-OP and the MUFON UFO Journal. Finally (chapter 15) he offers an annotated bibliography of a variety of books, videotapes, and newsletters that will be of interest to the uninitiated reader.

In conclusion, "Bigfoot of the Blues" serves as an important chronicle of the events transpiring in this region of southeastern Washington. It is a significant and original contribution without the redundancy common to many contemporary book on the subject. The body of evidence tangential to this narrative is conspicuous, since it includes among other things, the best documented (although not the first) case of dermatoglyphics, the first hair samples to be subjected to DNA sequencing analysis, long lines of tracks that were followed for miles by numerous witnesses and repeat appearances of recognizable trackmakers. These events represent perhaps the most intense and widely publicized activity since the Bluff Creek era of the 1950's and 1960's. Furthermore, much of the evidence has been studied extensively by three scientists, Grover Krantz, Wolf H. Fahrenbach and myself.

Admittedly, a few persistent perplexities remain, but much of the naive criticism of the evidence is dispelled upon closer scrutiny. In my opinion, too many have been too quick to simply toss out the "baby with the bath water."

As Orchard articulates it in his opening pages, the skeptics have attempted to refute the matter because they really know nothing about the subject and so can speak of it with the most authority.

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Section Two

Reports of Bigfoot activities from 1993 to 2001

These are mostly from my weekly column published in the "Waitsburg Times," Waitsburg, WA. The date of publication will be noted at the heading of each story, plus other information as pertinent.

Bigfoot Display at Mall Brought Forth Some Tales

Paul Freeman, left, and a friend load the lifesize Bigfoot, created under Freeman's directions by a Whitman College artist-taxidermist.

Remember the tales of baseball when the Hot Stove league was in session? Well, we have here some of the same only about Bigfoot. Some interesting stories were heard at a Bigfoot display at the Blue Mountain Mall in Walla Walla this winter. Out of it came some stories worth repeating here as lore for the Bigfoot buffs of the Walla Walla Country. Here's 'The Times' story in the **Jan. 28. 1993** issue.

Hot dog! The thaw is on the ground, the snow all but gone, so off we go to the wild blue mountains behind the house!

Oh. not so fast there. bucko! This winter has not run its course. And. before we get too carried away with getting out into the brush -- and heaven knows. it sure has been a long. long time since the last time! -- we must recount some hot stove tales.

Despite highly inclement weather with several inches of snow clogging roads. etc.. many people showed up the two days to "Oh" and "Ah" over the skulls. bent limbs. plaster casts of huge human tracks and the life-size replicas of a pair of Bigfoots. Those critters. made by a Whitman College artist with Paul Freeman's specifications and recall. truly dominated the display. One is more than six feet tall and the other is eight feet tall.

I was at the display and near the pair of giants when a toddler of a girl suddenly spurted ahead other parents to reach up and grasp the hand of the black-furred female Bigfoot!

The girl. 3 1/2-year-old Chelsey Stevens. was enthusiastically pumping on the huge hand when her parents got to her. Parents are Mark and Kim Stevens. 1016 Pomona St.

This utter lack of fear by Chelsey was remarkable because many children her age want little or nothing to do with the gigantic. hairy "people" standing amid the Freeman display.

Well. you know: "A little child shall lead them."

This unique display was not the only place for plaster casts of Bigfoot tracks.

Visiting at the display was College Place resident. Frank Jenson. who brought along a cast made in Cascade. Montana. some16 years ago. Jenson says he got the cast when a Canadian Bigfoot team came to the little Montana town to investigate reports of several tracks. Jenson got a copy of the principal track recorded by the team. He had the 15-inch cast in a box. Jenson says he has had an abiding interest in the Bigfoot/Sasquatch matter for many years. retaining an open mind on the subject. although not reaching many solid conclusions.

In my first report on this Bigfoot display. I told of the experience of a Walla Walla father and son who checked out the Bigfoot seen by the son one night on the Tiger Canyon road two years ago.

This was volunteered by the father who related the story to Freeman and I at the mall.

Jenson related a similar story of two hunters who were stunned one day on a recent fall day in the Blue Mountains. The two men were at a stand. watching for a deer to come across an open glade. Suddenly.

there strode across before their wide-eyed vision "a big, hairy creature of some kind."

The thing was soon out of sight but not out of mind, Jenson says, noting that the young man who stopped at the display recounted the happening with clarity.

The often made comment of skeptics is "Why don't more people see this thing?"

Well, fear of ridicule is probably the main reason more people don't volunteer they saw one.

But, whenever Paul Freeman set up his display in a mall it never fails to draw people who come forth to volunteer their own Bigfoot experience.

This past week I got in the mail a highly interesting little booklet about the Bigfoot subject,"They Walked Among Us." Ed Fusch, Riverside, Wash., anthropologist, has put it together. It is the culmination of several years of interviews and intensive research among Indians of the Colville and Spokane reservations. He learned there are many Indian beliefs about the Bigfoot/Sasquatch, which goes under a host of names, almost a different one for each tribe. There are eleven tribes in the Colville Confederation.

"Among the various tribes," Fusch says, " Sasquatch was referred to by several different names, but a common conceptual thread permeates all of their beliefs ... he was always considered a human being, a member of their own species ... prior to the arrival of the white man, the only people known to the Indians were other Indians and Sasquatch."

The Sasquatch went by names such as "Skanicum," or Stick Indian, by the Lake tribe; "Choanito," or Night People, by Wenatchee Indians and as "Sewe-ney-tum" by other Indians, Fusch says.

From his many interviews with old Indians and young alike, Fusch has compiled many of their stories about the Bigfoot.

Here's a short one:

"Laura, (a member of the Lake tribe and 87 when Fusch got her story in 1985) reports that some years ago, she shot a deer not far from Nespelem, Wash. Being alone at the time and unable to load it into her car, she returned the next morning with her grandson. Several Skanicum were on the scene. One, a female, was standing just along

side the road and never moved as Laura drove by her, getting a good look at her. She looked human, was about six feet tall, her body covered with long, brown hair, had a sloping forehead with ears that appeared to be pulled upward.

"Arriving at the deer carcass they found that the liver had been removed as had the tender parts of both rear flanks. The skin had been carefully rolled from the hind quarters, the meat was very clean (she reiterates and emphasizes how clean the meat was). She and her grandson left the carcass as they found it and left the area.

"Laura states that there are areas just south of Nespelem and about two miles north of the Columbia River where she can call Skanicum (in his language, she knows how) and he will answer. She believes that they live in the area.

"At one time, she encountered a large male Skanicum on the highway near Nespelem. It tried to converse with her, making organized sounds, leaving her to believe that they have a language. She left quickly."

Fusch has promised to come to Walla Walla one day and visit the weekly gathering of Bigfoot enthusiasts at Blue Mountain Mall. A couple of old standbys at these Wednesday morning coffee breaks (Wes and Swede Sumerlin) are looking forward to such a visit. As boys, these two Walla Wallans lived on the Colville Reservation and learned how to track all manner of beasts.

But, they were cautioned not to follow the big tracks of the"Wild man"

Recapping1993 Bigfoot Activity in Blue Mountains

(**JAN. 20, 1994**) --- Compared with the years just ahead of it, 1993 was a "quiet" year for the Bigfoot story of the Blues.

We just didn't find many tracks or other evidence of the critter.

Or, did we?

Checking back over the months of '93 I can recall or have records of only five findings of tracks or evidence including a possible sighting of the creature itself. We found miles of tracks in 1992 and 1991, for instance,

Why the dearth of such evidence last year?

Turning to Wes Sumerlin, long-time Blue Mountains tracker, we find a belief in things having gotten "back to normal" as he put it. From the 1960s there had been evidence of the Bigfoot (and companions or family?) in the Blues, Wes noted. Then, came the epic sighting at close range by Paul Freeman in 1982 and things got "abnormal" for several years, he adds.

If you'd like to read just how abnormal that was, pick up a copy of my book, "Bigfoot of theBlues." It recounts those years since 1982.

Some of the normalcy of the Bigfoot matter in the 70s and 80s included the continued sighting of a particular Bigfoot track, Sumerlin reminds.

"Back in 1972, the track was picked up in the Yakima Valley where apple bins were found tipped over by something and the track was there," he says. "Then, in 1976, we pick up the same track on the Wenaha. In '76 it turns up in Idaho and sometime in the early 80s in northern California.

"It was the same track in 1986 on Mill Creek that my brother, Swede (Sumerlin) found where something was robbing his trapline. Swede quit trapping in that area the same year, although that was the last year we've seen the track here."

Bigfoot things were slow getting started this past year and it wasn't until June that we got the report of some fresh tracks, seen on a game trail near Dixie. John Landon of Walla Walla was out checking on some timbered land he'd bought when he came across the spoor. While

there were only three tracks in the damp earth, they were quite plain and quite fresh.

Well, the summer months rolled on and we heard nothing until early fall when the Peter Byrne Bigfoot research team called to alert to a sighting near Mt. Emily. I talked to the sighter, a hunter out with his buddy, scouting for an elk hunt later that fall. The man asked for anonymity. He also said he had been a "lifelong skeptic of the Bigfoot thing."

Now, after seeing an eight foot furry creature stroll down the hillside across a small ravine (he said some 500 yards away) and sit down at the base of a pine .... well, now he's a believer!

Getting into their pickup truck the sighter and his friend drove around a curve or two, thinking to stop and go across the ravine for a closer look. At this suggestion, the partner balked and the sightseer didn't want to go over alone, so they hurried on home to La Grande.

The guy sounded real sincere when I queried him on the phone but when he said his partner couldn't pick up the creature at the base of the tree, I began to waver in my own thinking. I know you can see "something" in the brush but fail to get hunting friends to make it out, etc., but there was this element of "doubt in this case. One of the most interesting cases of last year was that reported by Jonathan Sumerlin of WallaWalla late in September. It occurred a mile or so short of Squaw Spring campgounds when Jonathan and some CB/4x4 friends were gathered around a campfire. Hearing a hissing noise, Jonathan shined a spotlight and picked up some glowing eyes.

"We thought it might be a big cat, so fired a .44 into the air thinking to scare it away," Jonathan says. "The eyes didn't move. Then, when I went to higher ground and shined the light the eyes seemed to be up higher. It was then that I figured maybe we were being checked on by a Bigfoot." Jonathan, now 18, recalls graphically his first encounter with a Bigfoot up near Timothy Meadow two years ago"(also detailed in my book).

Another round from the .44 was fired, also into the air and away from the eyes, but they remained for a time, then faded away. Hissing noises and snapping of twigs continued to be heard in the darkness. At daylight, Bigfoot tracks were found and a friend, who came up from Walla Walla, made a plaster cast and followed the tracks for a mile or more before dropping out of sight, headed down into the Wenaha-Tucannon wilderness Area.

Jonathan says he thinks the night's experience changed the

minds of several of his friends from being Bigfoot skeptics to being believers.

Another skeptic has apparently changed his views, too. Mike and Sheryl Jenkins had shared a lot of experiences in the Blues as they enjoyed the cabin on Stewart Ridge over looking the Mill Creek watershed. Sheryl had claimed to seeing at least four Bigfoots while on solo horseback jaunts.

Mike had remained silent on the issue but says he was mostly a skeptic. Until the elk hunt season came and he had to go pack up out his kill. And found fresh Bigfoot tracks in the trail ... right on top of his own, made only hours before! This episode was Nov. 2.

Then, on Dec. 10, two of our best known Bigfoot trackers, Wes Sumerlin and Paul Freeman,were cruising a mountain road up near the head of Blue Creek (a few miles above Five Points) when they spotted tracks. These tracks were in some hard-packed snow.

While the big tracks were on the roadway, they went up a bank, through some huckleberry bushes, then back to the road and then off into the watershed, Sumerlin says.

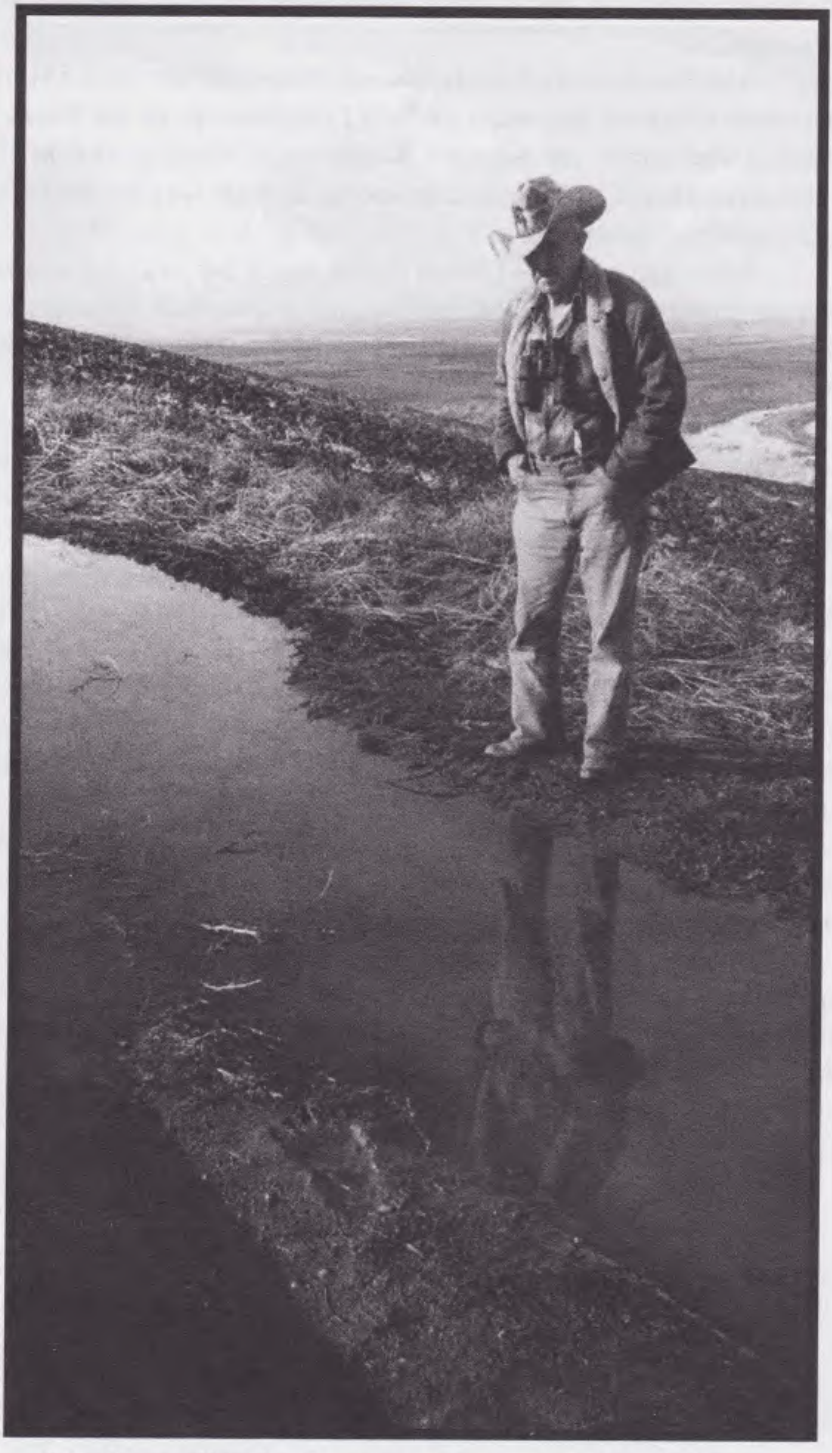
For a few feet, the big barefoot tracks paralleled two sets of tracks made by someone wearing hunting boots. Further, the booted tracks went into the hard snow an inch deep, but the Bigfoot tracks sank into the snow six inches or more!

In summary of the Bigfoot year, does all this have meaning?

There are some possible conclusions to be drawn from these sightings as with others of recent years.

Judging from the tracks, we could surmise there are four (and maybe more) Bigfoots who remain here the year around. Tracks of that many different creatures have been found (and plaster casts made) in all the four seasons.

Maybe 1993 wasn't such a lean Bigfoot year around here after all.



Wes Sumerlin checks out a footprint at Five Points.

A Week Never to be Forgotten Said Trackers of BF "Family"

This Bigfoot track was 19 inches long.

(February 16, 1995) ---- It was certainly a week never to be forgotten ... not if you're really into this Walla Walla Bigfoot matter, anyway.

We speak of the week that ended January and began February.

And, we speak of the Mill Creek-Scenic Loop-Meiners/Coyote roads vicinity.

Which, readers of these lines in the past will recall, is where we've been tracking this thing (these things, in some cases) for the past four years. By the looks of the tracks, checked out by numerous people in this week, it's in the plural this time... possibly one old Bigfoot, followed by a couple of "teen-agers." Or, it could be male and female adults with a single teenager.

Or, so it would seem from the tracks which appear up on the scenic Loop (10 miles east of here) just before that road "tops out" before heading back into the Walla Walla Valley.

The week has seen a lot of people checking out the thousands of tracks, apparently made by three creatures ... but none has gotten so caught up in the thrill of the hunt than Dar Addington. While this wasn't the first time for Dar to seek Bigfoot, this was her first time to be involved in such a massive sighting of evidence for this so-called (for some, at least) "missing link" of mankind. For her, it has been a period of highest pleasure, but with a load of frustration and utter disappointment. The latter came on the third or fourth trip to bring back what she knew were good photographs, only to learn the camera had malfunctioned and her roll of film was a blank! There's nothing so frustrating as this element of picture taking hobby. I know. The same has happened to me!

The thrills of seeking what seemed like a family of Bigfoots probably outweighed the photo losses, but that might be questionable, because what she filmed likely can't be done again without much effort.

The week of tracking Bigfoot was started on a Monday, real early, January 30. Duane Freeman of Walla Walla was just getting home from his night shift job when his phone rang and friends told him of hearing some "ungodly noises" while they were on top of the Scenic Loop Road Saturday night. When Freeman and his father, Paul, went to the area that day, they found all kinds of evidence of Bigfoot activity and indications of their having come from the hillside above Kooskooskie. Paul Freeman figures the loud noise made by helicopter logging in that area "spooked the critters out."

The elder Freeman (he's the guy who almost ran right into an eight-foot Bigfoot back in 1982) organized a search party to take off the next morning. In that party were he and Dar, Bill Laughery of West Richland (retired game department employee), Billy Field and Dave Been. All have been seekers of the Bigfoot around these parts for several years.

Heavy rains of that night (Monday) and during the first daylight hours of their search proved a dampener for the trackers, but did not diminish the ardor of most. Because of the rain, quality tracks were not found, but there certainly was no limit to those traced by members of the party that first day and every day which followed.

Three sets of tracks were noted by most and these were 11 inches, 13 inches and nearly 16 inches, the largest also being seven inches wide. One searcher thought there were only two Bigfoots, but agreed there might be three.

One thing they all agreed on, however: the heavy rains had

played havoc with the tracks so practically all thought of saving any died. Dar made a plaster cast of one and if things work out, it will be shown with this article. Laughery figured the tracks had probably been made the Saturday night (or Sunday) before the rains came. Saturday was the night the "ungodly noises" were reported.

Most of the tracking starts at the top of the Scenic Loop road and then head out west and parallel to the Mill Creek road below, staying near the grain field, then coming down to Mill Creek in the vicinity of the junction of Meiners Road with Mill Creek Road, according to Dar and Laughery.

Veteran tracker Dave Been, whose home is at the mouth of Blue Creek, was deeply disappointed in the rain having ruined the tracks.

"If a guy could have got onto tracks a day or two before all that rain, we might have done something," he said.

Paul Freeman echoed this sentiment, too. Freeman backtracked from the top of Scenic Loop as well as making at least one trip westerly to Mill Creek and then later, picked up tracks and followed them to the snow line.

"They were headed toward the (Mill Creek) Watershed when I quit following them" he said.

Most of the searchers agreed on the unusual "cavorting" of the Bigfoots they were tracking. It was something not noted in the past and something which lent some credence to their belief there were two small Bigfoots and an adult.

"It appeared to me that there were two running together, about 50 yards apart and they sort of intermingled," said Been. "It was quite confusing down in there ... you'd be tracking one and it would turn and go across the other's track ... you'd try to run that out, but it was so difficult what with the rain and all. The small ones seemed to be doing the moving around the most...."

It has been a contention of Been's for some time now that a grove of fir trees on the creek could be a Bigfoot mecca. He says he has found several kills of deer, probably made by cougars, and stashed in the brushy area. "A Bigfoot could spend a day or two in there if there's a kill or two for it to feed on."

Dar and Freeman found other evidence of Bigfoot presence in the trees down near Mill Creek, including a limb broken off about eight feet off the ground and long, reddish-brown hairs in the bark of the tree. It was when Freeman and Dar were tracking down to the creek that they also came across the strange "cavorting" signs as well as indications the

Bigfoots were wary of roadway traffic nearby.

Judging by the tracks the creatures stayed just far enough back from the crown of the hill, Freeman said, "so they could see (to the roadway) but not be seen."

It was on this trip that Dar and Freeman counted about 8,000 Bigfoot tracks, Freeman reported.

Later in the week, Dar and Freeman went their separate ways, with Freeman tracking through Coyote canyon on up to Five Points, then beyond to the snow before quitting.

Dar led a party of four others the same day, centering their search from Five Points down to the old Coyote School area. Dar breeds goats for hikers to use in back packing trips, so used three of her animals for the trip. Going with her were husband Mark and Dan and Robin Kenney of Dayton and Tim Faris of Walla Walla. It was a Bigfoot baptism for all but Dar and Mark and proved a thrilling outing, Dar said.

An outing which would have had far greater rewards had not the camera failed on her.

"It's Hair from a Primate Higher than a Gorilla"

(**April 13, 1995**). When three Bigfoots strolled along the rim of the hillside sloping up from Mill Creek at the end of January, they apparently left more than foot prints.

We've written here of that latest sighting of thousands of footprints in the Mill Creek area above the Seven Mile bridge. But, there's more. There's hair.

Dar Addington, breeder of goats for packing, and Paul Freeman, ex-watershed patrol rider, scouted out what they told me were more than 8,000 tracks.

They have also reported finding interesting hair samples. Dar found hers on a tree down on Mill Creek and near the Meiners (Coyote) road junction with the Mill Creek Road.

Freeman found hair higher up, above Five Points, when he picked up the tracks of the trio of Big foots after they climbed out of Mill Creek and headed back to the high country and possibly the watershed. Many Bigfoot aficionados, of course, believe the watershed is the "hangout" of these critters, in large part because mankind is forbidden to set foot within its boundaries.

Freeman, by the way, reports hair samples given to a Wyoming Bigfoot researcher, John Myoncynski, have borne fruit, so to speak. Freeman reports that Myoncynski, who sent the hair to a primate lab in Utah, heard interesting results of the lab's testing.

"It (the hair) is from a primate higher than the gorilla, but it is not from man ... it's something we know nothing of. "

The lab people seemingly were "real excited" about the tests they'd run on the Mill Creek hair.

Dar did not have the refined lab equipment of the Utah scientists but she has come up with something highly interesting all the same.

Dar used copying equipment at her place of employment to "copy" the hair sample she found on Mill Creek. The machine not only copies but can enlarge by several times. Laying along hair from her own head alongside the hair she found high up on the pine tree (with Bigfoot tracks around) Dar produced the "interesting" copy.

The enlargement copy of her hair comes out as a line as if drawn by a pencil.

The enlarged Bigfoot hair appears as a ribbon, several times wider than hers.

Two samples of hair ... seemingly pretty much the same to the naked eye, although one had more curl in it ... but each bearing remarkable differences when enlarged.

Woman Recalls Her Family "Lived Right Among Them!"

(**June 8, 1995**) -- Of course the call got my attention, especially when the woman ... in her 80s ...said the February Bigfoot track chase reminded her of the days on the upper Coppei when her family "lived right among them. "

Yes, and several other families who were homesteading in this section also experienced the family (or families) of Bigfoots who lived nearby, my caller informed me.

My caller, by the way, remains anonymous in this relating. That's her choice, but the story she tells is one of the most interesting of the many Bigfoot tales I've heard from this part of the Blue Mountains. And, after all, the stories recounted about the subject are what make up a big piece of the interest this anomaly seems to hold.

My caller had opened the conversation by observing that a comment about Bigfoots possibly eating a deer killed by a cougar, would prove a point she remembered about her childhood days on the upper Coppei. There, at Coppei Falls, she said, Bigfoots reputedly would chase elk and run them over the brink at the falls. Then, at the base of the cliff, the critters could pack off the elk at their leisure!

When I reminded her that early native American mankind had used the same tactic to kill off thousands of buffalo, she felt certain the old stories were true.

And, she had a number of stories to tell, too.

The story of the Bigfoot encounter at Huntsville in 1900 has been the oldest recollection locally of the Bigfoots of the Blues. What my caller was talking about were the experiences of her family and other homesteading families of the 1920s. She said she was 13 ("...that's 70 years ago") when her father recounted his own first experience with the Bigfoots which were to become so much a part of their life on the Coppei.

"My father told me one day he was looking across to an open hillside on which rested a huge white log. Then, he says he saw the 'biggest, strangest bear ever' walking out of the brush ... two others followed and then all went to the log and sat on it, then went to tearing

it apart and had their lunch (of grubs, etc.?) then went off down the trail. My father made me promise not to tell my mother about this incident."

My caller was to have her own experience and encounter with a Bigfoot as did her mother and two sisters, I was to learn as the telephone conversation continued.

What my caller saw that day possibly was a young Bigfoot.

"What I saw was a sort of man-creature, about six feet tall, reaching up into a young tree, its fingers spread ... it had brown hair and its face was gray...it turned its head on its shoulders like an owl would to see me. I froze and it just disappeared into the brush."

Her mother's encounter came one day when the family's herd of six milk cows was apparently "rustled" ... they were not in the usual place they were pastured in, my caller said.

"We always figured the Bigfoot family had herded the cows off... mother followed the tracks and after a time caught up to our cows with a small Bigfoot with them. She figured the older Bigfoots had left the young one to look after the cows.

"Mother said she looked at the Bigfoot and it looked at her. She was scared but ran after the cows and she and the cows all ran toward the homestead.

"Mother said the Bigfoot was just a caveman, but he was dressed up in furs and really needed a bath! "

My caller's second encounter was not with the creature itself, but it must have been close by for the strong odor was noted, a factor in many sightings of Bigfoots.

"My two sisters and I had ridden horseback into the woods one day ... we came across where limbs had been stripped from a young tree in the trail. The horses wouldn't step over them ... there was a rustling in the brush ... my horse reared up on its hind feet and wouldn't go over the pile of limbs. Then, I smelled a strong odor ... like a 100 pairs of socks from as many stinky feet ... not a 'dead' smell and not a 'skunk' smell ... a sweaty smell... real pungent, too."

My caller made an observation about the Bigfoot family and its possible relationship to the abandonment of homesteads on the Coppei. I have an opinion on that, but it would be interesting to talk with some of the descendants of those homesteaders.

Members of the Bigfoot family often raided her family's garden, my caller told me.

"Many people around there had experiences of following tracks

made by a big barefooted man ... sometimes the stride of tracks was so far apart we had to run and jump to get from one step to another ... it was a real big one, I guess."

My caller also noted that "a real big one looked into our windows one night. Lots of people up there had this sort of experience and it was pretty un-nerving to them ... I think it was a reason many left that area and gave up their homesteads ... they just moved out and never said why, although not all were doing too badly."

My own idea of why some people gave up homesteads was simply because the land would not provide a living for the family. I know this was the experience of my mother's family in the Colville country at the turn of the century. When the homestead was "proved up" her father had to head to the nearest town and take a job in a sawmill to earn a living. The land wouldn't do it and nobody was buying the land, either. So, the family wound up just moving out and abandoning the plans for the homestead, my mother told me.

A couple more comments about the Coppei Bigfoots.

According to my caller, the creatures "were a family ... no mistake about that and I think they even had names for each other. And, another thing, when a Bigfoot got angry, they'd throw rocks at whatever made it angry."

Encounter with Three Bigfoots Was Major Sighting of 1995

(**Aug, 17, 1995**) -- "It's just real hard for me to explain ... I never ran into anything like that in all my years in the woods."

That's former Daytonite Bill Laughery speaking, as he recalled the "really close" encounter with a trio of Bigfoots high on Biscuit Ridge Aug. 5.

Laughery, a retired game department employee, was checking out some Bigfoot tracks in that isolated area some 25 road miles easterly of Walla Walla. With him was a pair of veteran Bigfoot trackers, Wes Sumerlin and Paul Freeman.

Freeman had been in the area the day before. When he phoned Laughery and Sumerlin to report what he had found: the "humungous amount" of tracks, torn up logs and twisted young fir and pine trees.

Wes and Bill were eager to accompany Paul the next day.

Judging by tracks (three sets), hair found and sounds, there were three Bigfoots, a "really big one," a fairly small one and one in between these sizes, Laughery said.

Scene of the action into which the three men found themselves is seven air miles from downtown Walla Walla, or some 25 miles by paved road, mountain road and then game trails. They were close to the boundary of the Mill Creek Watershed when several Bigfoot tracks were spotted.

Following the tracks, the three men soon drew up short when they all became aware of a pungent odor hanging in the quiet morning air. There was a silence they all felt, too.

"We were in a heavy fir thicket," Laughery said, "when suddenly I could see this outline of a standing figure near a tree ... about 35 feet away from us. I said to Wes, 'That's him, standing over there.' "Wes was a little beyond me and I didn't think Paul could see it from where he was. I looked at it for several seconds, then told Wes I couldn't make out any eyes in the figure. I think it's one but I'm not sure.

"Paul walked on down aways from us. Wes and I decided we were going to have a closer look at the object outlined in the brush.

"But, you know, even at just 87 feet away (they stepped it off later), that critter sneaked out ... never even heard him ... although Wes said he saw him starting to leave ... a flicker, like a bird flitting ... we went right to the spot we'd seen it standing ... nothing, it had blended right into the brush and disappeared. I've never seen anything like it in all my years in these mountains.

"This one was a sort of buckskin-brown color. We picked up its tracks right away and started following. Paul went on down while Wes and I kept following the tracks on around.

"We soon jumped the Bigfoot and it dashed through the brush between us and Paul ... I don't suppose Paul and Wes and I were more than 30 yards apart ... " Laughery and Sumerlin continued to follow the Bigfoot's tracks down a game trail, then sat down to take a breather, Bill said. Freeman continued on down below them, Laughery added. "At this point, the big one whistled ... while we had been sitting there we could hear the little one behind us and the big one below us. They apparently went on around us and joined up and went right on over into the Watershed ... judging by the tracks we found in checking out the area."

It was at this point, when the trio of Bigfoots was bolting for the watershed, that Freeman, separated from Wes and Bill, shouted: Where are you guys ... let's get out of here.' "

Both Freeman and Sumerlin commented that one of the Bigfoots would have run right into Freeman had he not shouted when he did!

In describing the encounter, Sumerlin said both he and Laughery, while neither at first could see the Bigfoot standing so close, "we had that gut feeling in your body of a presence ... the hair was standing up on my head and arms ... it felt like we were right smack in the middle of them. All I saw was an object, like a stump up against another tree ... it was the same thing Bill was seeing, but I didn't realize it at the time ..."

Sumerlin is convinced the three men split up the party of three Bigfoots as the beasts were foraging for grubs, ants, etc. "We got right in the middle of them and they got up and dashed around, then ran off into the watershed," Sumerlin said.

Old mountain man that he is, Sumerlin volunteered the opinion that the Bigfoot "turns his foul odor on and off as he wishes, like a skunk. "Whatever the truth, the odor has long been a "trade mark" of the Bigfoot in many cases of its sighting and such was the case with this incident when the three men ran into the "family" on Biscuit Ridge.

Besides hundreds of tracks, the men found many twisted young firs, with long hairs embedded in the twisted part. Biggest such tree was about four inches through. Most of the trees had been twisted within the hour of their being found, Sumerlin said.

Hair found was in three colors: black, reddish brown and buckskin-blond. Tracks found at the scene were 15 1/2 inches by seven inches, 14 inches by 6 1/2 inches and the smallest was about nine inches by five inches wide, the men reported.

Sumerlin and Freeman have had previous encounters with Bigfoots in the Blue Mountains, but this was the first for Laughery. He said the experience was nothing like anything he had encountered during several years in the mountains.

"These things blend right into the scenery," he commented. "Had it been an animal, I'd have seen it, but these things are different from the woods animals I've known." And Laughery, who admitted to having experienced fear on more than one occasion while in the woods, said the Bigfoot experience was "kind of odd ... nothing like it ... the fear was not there." Although the hair stood on his arms before they saw the object by the tree. "I didn't seem to have any sense of fear about that thing," Laughery said. "And neither did Wes. When Paul wanted to 'get the hell out of here,' Wes just said: 'No, let's just wait a little minute.'

"Right after that was when we picked up on that thing standing there, looking at us. "Wes and I both knew something was there ... we could both sense it ... my old hair stood up on my arms and crawled up the back of my neck ... I knew it was there ... but I wasn't scared of it... somehow.

"No, I didn't feel any fear, but there certainly have been times in years past in the woods that I have.

"It's darned hard for me to explain ... I've never run into anything like that before."

Sumerlin, whose Blue Mountains experiences with Bigfoot date back many years, once again expressed a viewpoint about the animals I've heard from him before: "They're just part of life (up in the mountains) and we just go on with it." Sumerlin said he had also done a lot of comparing of these tracks and the activity signs they found with past encounters of his. He said he could see similarities.

For Freeman, the encounter with Bigfoots was but the latest since he ran into one on a logging spur road in1982. He has since seen five of the creatures in the Blue Mountains, he says. The Biscuit Ridge experience is the first time with two other people accompanying him.

"Now, others were with me when I found something and that's vindication for me in what I've been claiming," he says. Also backing him up was the statement by another veteran tracker, David Been, who visited the scene Tuesday. While rains the day before had destroyed many tracks in the area, there was "plenty of activity... real, legitimate (Bigfoot) activity, I'd say," Been told me.

"Lots of big logs had been moved around ... logs that would require several men to move one ... and a tree about six to eight inches through had been uprooted and tossed to one side...you could even see a hand mark where the green bark had slipped in the uprooting process." Been also cited the "obscure" activity for more authenticity for the encounter of the three men.

The "torn up" area was not in plain sight (probably ruling out hearing), he explained.

The Biscuit Ridge encounter is the latest in the Blue Mountains Bigfoot saga. It is highly likely there will be more. And, now, while Bill Laughery has finally "run into" a Bigfoot in the Blues, he still can't explain it. It's just as likely he possibly never will.

Meldrum Brought Some Big News on '96 Visit

(**Feb. 29, 1996**) _ Major news hit the Walla Walla Bigfoot Country last week as Waitsburg, Dayton,Touchet and environs mucked out of the biggest flood around here in a long, long time.

The news came in a pair of packages February 18, to set the matter in perspective time-wise. Bearing the load in both packages was Dr. Jeff Meldrum, primatologist at Idaho State University, Pocatello.

He was in Walla Walla to visit with the writer plus a pair of Bigfoot hunters, Wes Sumerlin and Paul Freeman.

While the finding of a series (50 or more) of Bigfoot tracks was a big moment (and one of the big news items above) the news Meldrum shared and brought with him was the really BIG news for me.

I'll talk of the many tracks Meldrum was put on to and of which he made casts, but for now, here's the No. 1 item. Meldrum eagerly brought forth a packet of color photos almost as quickly as he entered Wes' house. I had shown him a copied Bigfoot article but he then countered with "But, wait till you see what I have." What he had was the series of photos, taken from frames of what I feel will rate as a great Bigfoot documentary...very possibly more important than the 1967 Patterson film. In each photo a Bigfoot slowly emerges from some brush, then stands and walks up the snowy hillside. Since they were the kind of photos they were, the clarity wasn't too good, so I asked how the video originals would produce, in comparison with the famous Patterson film of a female Bigfoot.

Meldrum responded by pointing out that the Patterson pictures were on a 16-mm movie film, the figure of Bigfoot being less than 1/8-inch. Thus, an enlargement to a six-inch picture was demolishing any semblance of definition and ciarity. Not so with the filming Meldrum was showing us, he said.

"With this film, they told me they should be able to define fingernails on the animal," he said.

If that is the case, this filming should be revolutionary Bigfoot aspect, to say the least. While the Patterson filming was done by an

amateur while moving after leaping off his horse, the new film was made under more ideal conditions and with modern filming techniques. Meldrum said he wasn't certain of the date of the filming or of the exact location but told me the pictured action would be shown on an upcoming program of the "Border Lines" television show. We'll be glued to the TV.

The other Bigfoot news came a couple of days later, when Meldrum phoned me to report he and his brother, Mike, had left the Sumerlin home and called on Paul Freeman. "He said he had just returned from a trip into the foothills and had found some fairly fresh tracks, " Meldrum said. Of course, the Meldrums were eager to be shown the spot, so were taken there by Freeman.

"There were a lot of tracks, 50 or so, and of pretty good quality," Meldrum said. The tracks were in the area in which many have been found in recent years. They were off the Coyote (Meiners) Road leading up from the Mill Creek Road near the Seven Mile Bridge, he said. The site was near Five Points.

Meldrum was enthusiastic about the prints being authentic, citing several features of toe and foot action. He and Mike made several plaster casts of the manlike foot imprints.

This is the latest Bigfoot track sighting for the Blue Mountains foothills, but not the only one of this flood-time period. About a week earlier, John Sumerlin, who has a cabin a few miles above Dixie, snowshoed into his place from the Lewis Peak area. Near the cabin they came across several Bigfoot tracks in the snow and took some photographs.

There has been speculation by some that the Bigfoot animal hibernates like a bear. This might not be the case, with this latest incident of tracks in the snow. A few other stories have come my way of the same thing, including one of a Bigfoot running across an open area high in the mountains... in a couple of feet of snow. Doing the sighting was a pilot in a low-flying private plane.

Another incident I recall was a couple of winters ago when some big tracks were found in two feet of snow at the head of the Tiger Canyon road.

Meldrum, by the way, doesn't claim to be any Bigfoot "expert," but he does have much knowledge about primates. And, that's how come he was involved in the purported sighting of a Bigfoot in northern California last fall. Film footage was shot then, too.

Meldrum has spent many hours scrutinizing the videotape of

this incident which was TV-aired.

"As an anthropologist," Meldrum says, "I've always had a peripheral interest in goings-on with Bigfoot." His expertise lies largely in primate evolution and locomotion. He was recommended for the recent California assignment by the International Society of Cryptozoology, of which he is a member. This organization investigates the existence of animals not yet officially recognized by the scientific community.

As I write of the Patterson film and the latest Bigfoot photo entry, I am scanning a newspaper clipping of May 14, 1978. In the piece there is a report from the University of British Columbia's Sasquatch conference of that time. A paragraph in the item relates of a third Bigfoot filming. this one, shot by Frank White, of Seattle, near Mount Baker in 1977, was also shown at the conference along with that of Patterson.

According to the clipping, White and his wife were eating lunch alongside a trail when the Bigfoot came walking by. The White film shows a heavier, more rumpled Bigfoot than that shot by Patterson.

Regarding this, the clipping notes that a pair of Russian scientists, Dmitri Bayanov and Igor Bourtsev, strongly asserted their belief in the reality of Bigfoot. They also said they had authenticated the Patterson film and said the footprints found at the site demonstrated "subtle differences with man."

The Bigfoot of the Patterson film was described as having flat, shock-absorbent feet, enormous thigh muscles which bulged and a straight-ahead gait which contrasts with man's tendency to stick his feet out. The Russian scientists further noted other distinct characteristics in the Bigfoot footprints.

All of which is well and good, but until a living or dead Bigfoot is located for science to examine, the reality of Bigfoot will be trapped in haziness.

The upcoming TV footage reported by Jeff Meldrum will help clear up some of that ... hopefully.

Were "True Giants" Here Back In The Olden Days?

(**March 7, 1996**) ...When we speak of the Bigfoot of the Blues ... or anyplace else for that matter... we're talking something which is about eight feet tall that is making the tracks.

Now, this is pretty big and towers above the biggest normal humans on earth, such as those who populate the NBA. But, are there critters out there which make pigmies of the Bigfoot?

I'd read of such things and subscribed to a tiny publication which featured the "True Giants" of the earth in more than one issue. Mark A. Hall is the editor of the paper, "Wonders," published in Bloomington, Minn. What Hall was recounting were stories of man-shaped creatures towering up to 20 feet high or more and with feet measuring 24 inches long and more!

This compares with the eight feet height and 16-18 inch feet of our local Bigfoots. Hall has spent a lot of time in his study of this oddity and in his writings always cites numerous authorities for statements he makes. One is that true giants are not just tall human beings.

So what are they?

"I think they are living primates that have been evolving upon this planet over a period of at least six million years, for that figure is the age of their earliest fossils," Hall wrote. "They are gigantic, ranging in height when mature from 15 feet to 20 feet." Hall cites evidence of true giants in many parts of the world, but of special interest were sites in Alaska, British Columbia, Alberta, Washington, Oregon and Montana.

My own interest in the subject came a few years back when I came across an interesting local news item of 1878. More on that later.

The subject of towering man-like creatures had lain dormant on my personal agenda for some time until the periodical shuffling of papers came recently for my files. A long neglected letter indicated a friend who had shared some things about Bigfoot also had shared his own interest in gigantic personages. Frank Jenson, of College Place, sent along an interesting page from an old Seventh-day Adventist

publication of 1875, "Collection of Facts for the Times." There were several accounts of huge giants or their bones, found all over Europe, but I liked the following:

"The Sauk Rapids Sentinel (Minn.) gives the following:

"Day before yesterday, while the quarrymen, employed by the Sauk Rapids Water Power Company, were engaged in quarrying rock for the dam which is being erected across the Mississippi at this place, they found imbedded in the solid granite rock the remains of a human being of gigantic stature. About seven feet below the surface of the ground and about three and a half beneath the upper stratum of rock, the remains were found imbedded in the sand, which had evidently been dug out of the solid rock to receive the last remains of this antediluvian giant. The grave was 12 feet in length, four feet wide, and about three feet in depth, and is today at least two feet below the present level of the river. The remains are completely petrified, and are of gigantic dimensions. The head is massive, measures 31 1/2 inches in circumference, but low in the os frontis, and very flat on the top. The femur measures 26 1/4 inches, the tibula 25 1/2, while the body is equally long in proportion. From the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, the length is 10 feet, nine and a half inches. The measure around the chest is 59 1/2 inches. This giant must have weighed at least 900 pounds when covered with a reasonable amount of flesh."

Coming close to home, though, is the account I found in the old Walla Walla Union of 1878. The story was under the heading: "Whitman County Items: (From the Palouse Gazette, July 26, 1878)...

"Mr. E. J. Northcutt, of Wawawai, has left at the Gazette office a collection of fossil bones, which were discovered while grading the new road from Wawawai to the top of the hill north from Snake River. These fossils have the appearance of having been a mammoth human being. From computations made it is estimated that the body was 33 feet in height and weighed about 5,000 pounds. The bones were found imbedded in solid rock, 30 feet under ground, in such a very perfect condition as to leave no room to doubt their being human. Here is a rare study for scientists. To what race does this species belong and how long have these remains been buried in their rocky bed?

These curiosities can be seen at the Gazette office."

Some Bigfoot Reports From Near and Farther

(**JULY 25, 1996**)... Most recent sighting of Bigfoot activity in the Blues came July 10 near Deduct Spring, an area of a lot of Bigfoot activity in years past.

Reaching the site would have been easy prior to the February flood and resulting ripping up of roads throughout the Umatilla National Forest.

Going up Mill Creek and the auxiliary, Tiger Canyon road, is perilous for anyone in any rig short of a good four-wheel drive!

Or, so reports the trio who found some big footprints on such a jaunt. I speak of Wes and Peewee Sumerlin of Walla Walla and Bill Laughery of West Richland. Following their customary Wednesday coffee hour at the Blue Mountain Mall, the three decided to go "have a look-see."

They found what they were looking for when they were a short distance beyond the road which branches off to Deduct Spring, Wes said. A steep bank on the left side of the road bore quickly identified tracks of our big one ... gouged right into the soil as the critter came to the road the easy way. For it, that is! Wes said the tracks measured about 14 inches long and apparently came out of the Mill Creek Watershed, boundary of which lay just above the road at this point, he noted. Wes also estimated the tracks were about three days old at the time.

This latest report of the Bigfoot of the Blues reminded me of the 1982 sighting of one as reported by ex-Forest Service watershed patrol rider, Paul Freeman. Of all the reports of such encounters, I have always rated this one in a small grouping of those which have impressed me the most. Right along with the Freeman account, of course, is the 1967 encounter by the late Roger Patterson and Bob Gimlin.

In the Freeman encounter, the monster was coming down a steep embankment and had just landed on the road when the patrol rider spotted it. Bigfoot and man spotted each other simultaneously and just

as simultaneously turned and went their separate ways! Freeman recalled the Bigfoot's hair rising on its back and the creature's peering back at him as it strode away.

Along with the Patterson and Freeman encounters, now I have two more to add to my listing. One comes from a good Bigfoot summation, authored by Mark McDermott and appearing in the July 17 issue of the Seattle Times Magazine "Pacific." It's well worth the read if you're into this subject at all.

In each of the two encounters now added to my list, the person meeting up with the Bigfoot had been a non-believer basically. Each is a firmly convinced believer at this point!

McDermott's account related the experience of a Salem, Ore., resident, Kevin Jones, while hunting deer near Grants Pass, Ore., in 1993. It was early morning and Jones had walked into a clear-cut area and sat on a stump to wait for his hunting partner. In a few minutes he saw motion out the corner of an eye near the trees at the edge of the clearing. "As he turned his head to look," McDermott writes, "out walked a seven-foot-tall female Bigfoot, followed by an apparently younger one about half the size. Jones watched the pair undetected for five or ten seconds. The younger one, he noticed, seemed to be playing, walking kind of lackadaisically, planting his heels with each step. The adult paused and looked directly at him; she was now about 100 feet away.

"Jones was holding a rifle but was too completely awestruck to consider using it. 'It was like, whoa ... they really do exist!' he said. Upon seeing him, the female turned to the small one and seemed to beckon it forward. Not running but a little more hurried, they crossed the cut and disappeared into the woods on the other side.

" I'm open-minded, and I'd heard about this kind of thing but never really given it much thought,' he said. 'After I'd seen one, it kind of shattered by whole idea of reality. I had it in my mind how things are, but everything isn't always at it appears to be.'

The other Bigfoot encounter story came by the sheerest of piece of luck. A California Bigfoot friend called me one day to suggest I try to find the Art Bell talk show on my radio dial because Bell was going to feature Bigfoot, as he often does. Bell's program beams from Pahrump, Nev., but I picked him up on 610 AM. What I heard not only boggled my mind, but also that of Bell and his host for the evening, Ray Crowe, director of the Western Bigfoot Society in Portland. Identified

only as "Chris from Bakersfield," the caller unfolded a fantastic story. Chris admitted he had never believed in Bigfoot, figured the whole thing was a hoax, etc.

Until one day in 1982, when he was out walking with his dog in a heavily-wooded area when he was a teenager. He had his dog, but it was tethered to a chain leash. The scene is on the eastern slopes of the Rockies, about 40 miles north of Lincoln, Mont.

"We were turning back to the cabin and were in a thick area of the woods, when my dog stopped for a second," Chris began. "Then, I saw his ears go up, then he started to look to the left. I looked left, too, and at the same time heard what I thought was an elk bugling. The tone became so loud and intense, I started to black out.

"As I turned my head I saw this creature ... it was a female .... she was covered with reddish hair .... she was standing, fully extended, with her arm up on a branch. Her mouth was open ... she was probably not more than eight feet away ... you could almost feel her breath as she was screaming ... the scream went completely through me.

"I've never been afraid of things ... I've seen bears and mountain lions ... but this thing had me going down to the ground and passing out. My dog took off running as fast as he could. His running pulled me up to my feet and I was running with him... after a good fourth or half mile, we stopped at a spring and he got a drink. I looked back and was shaking. We went on to my cabin, but then I started to get mad ... I wasn't going to let something like that scare me or run me off!

So, I grabbed a .30-.30 and me and my dog headed back there. Well, we got as far as the spring and neither of us would cross it ... he wouldn't and I couldn't either.

"That pretty much ended my hunting and solitary hiking experiences." Chris said he didn't go into the woods much after that but whenever he did almost every time he had the feeling "something" was in the brush looking at him. I'd get the feeling and turn around but every time I could never see anything. "Just like that one I saw. When she got done with her screaming, as I was hitting the ground, the last thing I saw her do was drop down to a crouch ... she must have been eight or nine feet tall ... and disappeared faster than anything I've ever seen. The whole episode couldn't have taken more than a span of five seconds."

Which reminds me of the Bigfoot encounter by Sumerlin and Laughery in August of 1995 in the Blue Mountains.

They too recounted how the critter they spied in the brush "just suddenly disappeared."

Patterson Film Debunking Gets Response from Author

(**Nov. 8, 1997**) ---- A recent story in a London-based newspaper which debunks the 1967 Bigfoot movie filmed by the late Roger Patterson, demands a response. Here's mine.

What was offered as proof that Patterson unwittingly faked the famous footage has been countered in the past by scientists and students of the matter. The statements by these men, recognized top names in the Bigfoot world, absolutely refute the London 'Sunday Telegraph' story of Oct. 19, 1997. The story was picked up and run in the November 1, issue of CNI News, an electronic magazine devoted to the UFO, Bigfoot, space exploration and related issues. Questions may be directed to its editor, Michael Lindermann at CNINews1@aol.com. Statements quoted herein are from their issue of Vol. 3, No. 17.

In the 'Sunday Telegraph' story co-authored by Mike Lewis and Tim Reid, a Hollywood director, John Landis, revealed: "That famous piece of film of Bigfoot walking in the woods that was touted as the real thing was just a suit made by John Chambers." Mr. Chambers, the article notes, "has refused to confirm or deny the reports."

'October 20' (the articled notes) marked the 30th anniversary of the day that Bigfoot hunters Roger Patterson and Bob Gimlin emerged from the wilds of northern California with the celebrated film, perhaps the only footage of unexplained phenomena which has stood up to rigorous scientific examination. Patterson died in 1972 convinced he had filmed a real Bigfoot.

But Howard Berger told a Bigfoot investigator, Mark Chorvinsky: "It was like a gag to be played on the guy who shot it. The guy never knew it was a hoax his friends played on him."

The subject of the Patterson film, a large, hairy, upright-walking creature with wobbling breasts, is seen walking left to right, turning briefly to glare in the direction of the cameraman before disappearing into the trees.

But, the late Bob Titmus, who arrived on the scene at Bluff Creek shortly after the '67 filming, reported he had followed the

Bigfoot's tracks and even said he found evidence the Bigfoot had sat down, watching Patterson and his partner, Bob Gimlin, from a vantage point above the men.

The sharp-eyed observations of Titmus, who, by the way, had reported seeing three Bigfoots during his lifetime (two at one time) is but one refutation of the 'Sunday Telegraph' article.

John Green, a British Columbia newspaperman who was acquainted with Patterson long before 1967, and who has studied thousands of Bigfoot tracks and track casts, authored early definitive books on the subject.

In his book, "On the Track of the Sasquatch," Green notes this about the Bluff Creek tracks:

"The tracks appeared perfectly natural and normal. The same as the many others that we have tracked and become so familiar with over the years, but of a slightly different size. Most of the tracks showed a great deal of foot movement, some showed a little, and a few indicated almost no movement whatever. I took plaster casts of ten consecutive imprints and the casts show a vast difference in each imprint, such as toe placement, toe gripping force, pressure ridges and breaks, weight shifts, weight distribution, depth, etc. Nothing whatever indicated that these tracks could have been faked in some manner. In fact, all of the evidence pointed in the opposite direction. And no amount of thinking and imagining on my part could conceive of a method by which these tracks could have been made fictitiously."

In his book Green has even more to say, but here's what he observes about the possibilities of a suit having been used to fake the Bluff Creek creature:

"I do not contend that no such contrivance could be built, but I do suggest that the thing could not be just a man in a fur suit. The 'suit' would have to contain an elaborate mechanism which would probably not be much simpler or cheaper than a machine without a man inside. Confidence men have done some remarkable things on occasion, and sometimes at great expense, so I will not say that such a thing is impossible, but knowing Patterson I cannot imagine him doing such a thing, if indeed it could be done, nor do I think that he could have raised the money to do it."

"I have noticed that scientists who talk to Patterson are not prepared to accuse him of perpetrating the hoax, but since they are equally unable to accept that the thing he photographed was real, they seize on the only other alternative, that someone was out there in a fur

suit hoaxing him. Oddly, they are thus choosing the one alternative that is literally impossible. Patterson has photographs not only of the creature, but also of its tracks, and these shots show the men's own tracks all around the Sasquatch tracks. It is obvious from their depth that the big tracks are made by something several times heavier than the people. Now, if there was a man swinging along inside a suit when Patterson took his movie it was most certainly not a man carrying a heavy load nor walking over four miles an hour with three-and-a-half foot strides and deeply bent knees. A man carrying the weight to make the tracks Patterson and Gimlin say this thing made as they watched would have to be a mighty individual to manage even a slow shuffle. It follows that if the thing on the film is a hoax, the tracks and the film could not possibly have been made at the same time, as Patterson and Gimlin state. If there is a hoax, they have to be involved."

Grover Krantz, Washington State University anthropologist, is probably best known as one of the very earliest scientists to lay his career on the line and publicly announce that he felt the Bigfoot thing was something real. He has written a scholarly book on the subject, 'Big Foot Prints.' In the book, Krantz (who also had been acquainted with Patterson) has this to say of the Patterson film of 1967:

"After watching the film many times, I told Patterson about some its technical consistencies that were evident to me. With most of these he already knew what was involved or quickly caught on. But when I talked about some of the more technical details of bio-mechanics, he soon showed the familiar blank look of a student who had lost the drift of the explanation, but was still trying hard to pay attention. Yet he must have known all of these details in order to create the hoax (assuming he knew of a hoax). For instance, he could see the anterior position of the front of the shin, but how that related to foot leverage was quite beyond his understanding. Also he had originally estimated that it weighed only half of what was settled on later, yet all the details were calculated to fit with the greater weight. I think that a hoax is most unlikely on these grounds alone.

"A few years after the film was made, Patterson received a letter from a man in Thailand who assured him a Sasquatch was being held captive in a Buddhist monastery. Patterson spent most of his remaining money preparing an expedition to retrieve this creature; I was to be part of the operation. Then a man who was sent to investigate on the spot found out it was a hoax. At the time Patterson knew he was dying of Hodgkin's disease and firmly believed that with enough money he

might be cured. Instead of making another Bigfoot movie, which he could have done if he had faked the first one, he spent almost everything he had on a wild goose chase. Then he died."

When he secured rights to the Patterson film, Rene Dahinden, a man who has been in this Bigfoot hunt for as long as anyone, was soon showing the film to scientists in Russia. What resulted from their highly intensive study of the film is found in 14 pages of the book, 'The Sasquatch and Other Unknown Hominoids.' This 335-page book is a compilation of scientific papers relating to Bigfoot as edited by Vladimir Markotic. Introductory comments for each paper are by Krantz.

One paper in the book, authored by two Russians, Dmitri Bayanov and Igor Bourtsev and Dahinden, minutely dissects the every movement of the female Bigfoot in Patterson's historic film. These details are to be found on pages 219 through 233 in the book. In their summary of their findings in their paper, the authors make these observations:

We have subjected the film to a systematic and many-sided analysis both in its technical and biological aspects. We have matched the evidence of the film against the other categories of evidence and tested its subject with our criteria of distinctiveness, consistency and naturalness. The film has passed all our tests and scrutinies. This gives us ground to ask: who other than God or natural selection is sufficiently conversant with anatomy and bio-mechanics to design a body which is so perfectly harmonious in terms of structure and function?

Further research may correct some of our findings, but it seems most improbable that the positive result can be voided. Hence we confidently give this verdict:

"The Patterson-Gimlin movie is an authentic documentary of a genuine female hominoid, popularly known as Sasquatch or Bigfoot, filmed in the Bluff Creek area of Northern California not later than October 1967, when it was viewed by Rene Dahinden and other investigators."

Others, as equal to the task as Titmus, Green, Krantz, Bayanov, Bourtsev or Dahinden, could offer similar refutation of the 'Sunday Telegraph' article which appeared in CNI News. These have done the job admirably, it would seem.

Sumerlin Reports on Some Bigfoot Activity in Early 1998

(March 5, 1998) -- To those readers who follow the Bigfoot matter around here and those who do not, let it be known:

The critter is alive and well in the Blue Mountains!

Like so many others who have over the years made the Wes Sumerlin home on Dell Avenue their first port of call when they see something unusual up there, we too call on this Blue Mountain patriarch.

That's what a lot of people call him as they refer to the guy who has had close contacts with the curio of the crags, our Bigfoot of the Blues. Sumerlin and his family have lived for many years with this creature's presence and have treated it pretty much like everyone else treats chipmunks.

"They are part of the woods and we've always treated them just like that," Wes has told me (and others) on many occasions. So, when we wended our way out Dell Avenue the other day, hoping to get an updating of sorts on what has been going on in the mountains concerning our hairy friends, we were not disappointed with the reports Wes had for us.

The first incident Wes related spawned the second, you might say.

"It started when Bill (Laughery), PeeWee (Natalie Sumerlin) and I took a drive up into the foothills (Feb. 11) to see if there was any action," Wes began. His use of the word "action" means simply:

Bigfoot signs, tracks or itself.

The party picked up some Bigfoot tracks all right, up near Five Points, first spotted by Laughery, sharp-eyed ex-game warden and Dayton,WA native. They checked out the tracks around the old raspberry berry patches of the abandoned Coyote School, then on down the road, then off the road, down to Mill Creek, Sumerlin told me. There, the trackers found indications the creature had been into the

dried blackberries of a huge patch on the creek side.

This was the same routing of Bigfoot tracks found in 1991, Sumerlin reminded. He also added the observation that not only were they following a Bigfoot's tracks all this distance, they were following the same Bigfoot that had made the tracks in January, 1991!
Sumerlin figures the tracks they were following had been made a week or so earlier. Rains had done damage to the tracks, but they were plainly huge foot prints and toe marks were still distinguishable.

Then, the second incident.

"A day or two later," Wes said, " I was telling Lane Savage (a fellow Bigfoot seeker) what we had seen and he told me a very interesting story that had happened, about the time of our Bigfoot's track making, at the home of his daughter, Sandy, who lives on Mill Creek near the berry patch."

Lane told me, 'That's about the same time as when my daughter called me and said her dog was having a fit and trying to jam his way into the front door to get into the house. I told her to let the dog in, she did and it made a beeline for the nearest bed and got under it and stayed right there the rest of the night.'

"Now this isn't your ordinary dog," Wes went on. "This is an outside dog, bred for the outdoors and afraid of nothing you'll find outdoors. He has taken on cougars and bears up there more than once. It's a big sheep dog with a cross of German shepherd, a good-sized dog." Of course, we don't know what caused the fright for this dog, or if it had anything to do with its having encountered the Bigfoot that made the tracks found by Wes, Bill and PeeWee. But, those who have followed the Bigfoot matter will recount many stories of how the bravest of dogs will quaver and run when one is encountered.

Some have been heard to opine that the Bigfoot thing around here has died out. That isn't the story I got when I visited Wes Sumerlin the other day. He had some 'goodies' for me, all reports of Bigfoot activity in the past year or so and most of it some 10-15 miles above Dixie, or around 20-25 miles from Walla Walla. He reeled off several stories of sightings, including two incidents of Bigfoots and big game.

The most recent came last fall during the elk-hunting season and was a sighting which has apparently made a believer out of a guy who formerly was a skeptic of it all, Wes said. But, since the guy wouldn't give permission for his name to be used in this printed report, we'll go with something else and call him "Jackson." Jackson was one of a party of three men who were staked out at sunrise on a point just below the

3,000-foot elevation about 15 miles above Dixie, Wes said. Jackson was watching some cow elk come out of some trees and into a clearing across the draw and went to feeding in the open area. None were qualifiers for the license Jackson carried, though, so he used his binoculars to scan the area.

"Suddenly a spike bull (a qualifier!) strolled out into the clearing and Jackson put it down with a single shot, watching the bull as its tumbled down the hillside into brush, where it hung up. Something caused Jackson to raise his eyes a bit and as he did, he saw a big (gorilla) absolutely the biggest darned (gorilla) I've seen, come out of the timber toward the downed elk.

"Jackson said when he saw the (gorilla) standing there, he put his binoculars to his eyes to get a better look. About that time, he told me, as if the(gorilla) had spotted Jackson or else seen the light reflected off the binoculars, but it just sort of took a deep breath, spun around and slowly sauntered off back into the timber, it didn't run, just ambled off sort of fading away and out of sight just like that one Bill and I saw in '95."

"Jackson also said the animal he'd seen that day was bigger than a gorilla and stood upright, not hunched over," Wes recalled.

The guy who was a skeptic about Bigfoots all these years might still harbor doubts, but he also has no response when you ask him what in the world a gorilla is doing in this part of the world and up where there's snow.

"And, he was sure wild-eyed as heck when he came out to tell us about what he'd seen," Wes remembered vividly. "Where he put the Bigfoot stuff down to the work of spirits, before the incident, he sure as heck is taking it seriously now."

Of the other Bigfoot incidents in recent months, suffice to note them briefly:

1. Two men hunting bear a year ago, downed one, then went back to their truck to get skinning gear. When they returned to where they'd left their kill, the bear was gone. One man, going to the top of a knoll, shouted that he saw a Bigfoot packing off their bear!

2. Last year a neighbor of Jackson's who has a hunting cabin a few miles above him, opened the back door to throw out a pan of dishwater and threw it into the face of a Bigfoot standing there! He isn't

selling his cabin but also will not return until he gets over being scared.

3. Forced to park their truck and ford a creek to get into their cabin, another cabin owner in that area took a load of groceries to the cabin and came back to the truck to find it ransacked. Fourteen-inch tracks were found around the truck.

Just by way of reporting on the man who found Bigfoot tracks in June, 1982 and told about them, only to find his life get turned around, Paul Freeman moved to Portland last fall. His wife, Nancy was transferred there from the Walla Walla Bi-mart store. Nancy is manager of a new Bi-mart which recently opened there. Paul had no sooner hit Portland, than Ray Crowe, director of the Western Bigfoot Society there, billed him as the speaker for the next meeting of the society.

But, as the reader can judge from the stories above, the Bigfoot matter has not died out with the departure of Paul Freeman.

Or, as Wes Sumerlin points out: "We've seen and heard about Bigfoot here in the Blue Mountains for a lot of years before Paul ever came here."

That's something a lot of so-called Bigfoot experts have completely ignored, overlooked or chosen not to acknowledge.

But, that's another story.

For Some Great Bigfoot Country Head for the Blues

(**Nov. 25, 1999**) --- Want some real views of the Blues?

Then head up Biscuit Ridge out of Dixie for the views you won't forget! Then, after a few miles of looking across canyons created by Dry Creek and its forks, one gains another view... the wide open (from this vantage point!) look at the Walla Walla Valley. Here's the sprawling city of Walla Walla and its neighboring towns to boot... all spread out before you!

Oh, we saw all that and even saw what might have been a trace of a Bigfoot's footprint!

For this trip to the Blues was not only for its views ... it was a chance to scout the terrain where Bigfoot tracings have often been seen.

Our host and driver was Bill Laughery of West Richland, but a Columbia County native known to many. For a time he was with the state game department here, before transferring north. Laughery has been around these hills for many a moon, too, both as game warden and plain citizen, like me. If Bill doesn't know this land like the palm of his hand, he's been wearing gloves too much.

Bill is familiar with the area's twists, turns, dips and doodles. "Doodles" in his case can be the Bigfoot creature, which apparently has set up camp or permanent home in the area, specifically the Mill Creek Watershed, which is close at hand.

For our morning junket the other day ... Mary and I along with Bill ... it was to locate places where Bill and the late Wes Sumerlin had seen a Bigfoot and had seen ample evidence of a small one and a big one on another occasion and yet more evidence on a third time. All in the same or nearby vicinity in the past few years. I hadn't been along with Bill and Wes, so Bill was shepherding me around to the scenes of the sightings.

As one drives along the mountain road, going at a very slow pace since the roadway is not exactly US 12, one keeps one's eyeballs peeled to the ground. The time of year we were doing our scouting is ideal as the roadbed is wet from recent rains. The mountain road (such as we traveled, at least) is usually pretty "greasy" in the early wet months of spring, get real dusty in the heat of summer months, but with

some rain in the fall are not bad.

And, with recent rains, footprints of lots of critters stand out a lot better. So, as we travel, we eye the earthen embankments along side the road, scanning for marks indicating creatures had come down the bank to the roadway. This is a proven way of finding Bigfoot tracks, after you've sifted through tracks of elk, cattle and other animals.

The day you are doing this and suddenly spot a track like made by a barefooted man. ... only a whole lot bigger ... then you have begun the process of changing from a scoffer to a believer.

Believe me!

I don't know if the two hunters we ran across on Biscuit Ridge are now believers but they might be following a five-minute discussion of his experiences by Bill Laughery.

When we told the hunters what we were doing, they responded with something like: "You're kidding!" or "You really mean it?"

As we assured them we were seriously looking for Bigfoots or their signs, the two hunters quit exchanging owlish looks between themselves and started paying more attention to what Bill was telling them. As I said, after five minutes of his relating experiences in the area he and Wes had shared in recent years, the hunters left.

But a lot more knowledgeable of the terrain in which they were hunting and with a lot to fill their conversational lags.

This terrain of Biscuit and Blacksnake ridges is privately owned land. A lot of timber has been and is being logged. As we made our way down off the mountain, we drove past a creek's canyon ... a pretty narrow one ... and we could see across to the other side. What we saw as we drove along brought sadness or chagrine or both. Over there, a lot of towering lone pines had been cut, then dragged up the steep hillside to be hauled to a sawmill. In the process deep gashes resulted, down which torrents of spring runoff water will gush, ripping up the soil, sending it to the creek below, a tributary of Mill Creek.

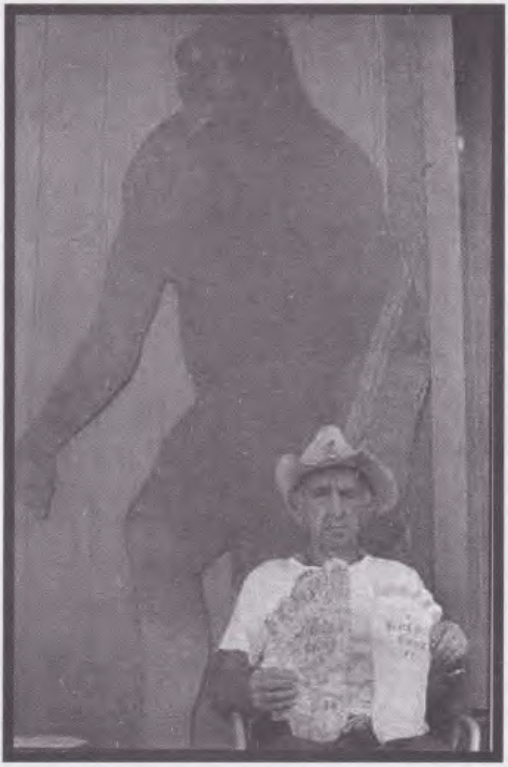
This scene was the major disagreeable aspect of our trip. But, there was another: enough litter (pop and beer bottles being prevalent) along the roadsides to fill a sizable truck. So many people can be so unthinking for so long a time while enjoying the mountains! I don't understand what's so hard about leaving the container in your vehicle until one gets home or to the nearest garbage can.

We started our little junket by turning at the Dixie School and heading into the mountains via the Dry Creek (Biscuit Ridge) road and then came down to Mill Creek by way of Blue Creek, down from Five

Points, of course.

We saw a lot more than some prime views of the Blues and I learned more about this fascinating subject of Bigfoot of the Blues as I trod with Bill Laughery the terrain in which he and Wes Sumerlin had experienced it.

Bigfoot Was Featured in State Tour Guide on Tape



Wes Sumerlin and his Bigfoot casts and wall cutout.

(Oct.7, 1999) --- Recently issued by Northwest Heritage Resources in Olympia, WA is a revised edition of a SE Washington tour of 153 miles along U.S. Highway 12 from Richland to Clarkston.

One of the most unique parts of this new book-and-tape is the inclusion of people telling about various bits of folklore that go into the fullest telling of our region's story. Having been acquainted with one of the most intriguing of such stories, Bigfoot, for many years, I was pleased to see it included. Besides giving some space to Dixie and its beginnings, writer Jens Lund saw fit to tell about the Bigfoots that roam near Dixie in the Blue Mountains foothills. The late Wes Sumerlin, who for many years was considered the Bigfoot 'guru,' of these parts, is quoted as he tells about one of his encounters with the elusive creature.

His story in the guide book follows:

"I was going down a canyon, six mules behind me, and all at once, those mules tracked like they wanted to run over me. They were bucking up, trying to pass on the trial, and all I could see was a wreck coming up. I looked back, I happened to notice, across the canyon, a bear come out of the brush and I take a second look and it wasn't a bear. It was standing upright, walking on its hind feet. A bear walks (upright) six or seven steps, then it goes back down and goes on four feet.

"But this kept coming two footed. Then it went right across the ridge into the next brush. Then I didn't see him no more for maybe a mile. The wind shifted and that's what it was, the mules were smelling this critter! They weren't seeing it, they were smelling the thing."

"We were coming around the river and they started piling up again and I looked back and I was looking for it that time. First two, three times I looked back, I didn't see nothing. Then I did see it. About halfway across the ridge, I picked it up going down into the brush. I didn't see it no more. I was telling one of the guys and they went up there to look at them tracks and they couldn't believe it! They said, 'That can't be no bear, because there ain't no toenails, and it's bigger than any bear we got in this country.'

"They thought maybe it might be a grizzly or something, but it was still bigger than a grizzly and there wasn't no toenail marks."

Sumerlin is pictured in the book, seated in front of the life-sized cutout of a Bigfoot he'd nailed to the side of his house at 1333 Dell St. in Walla Walla, and he is holding two plaster casts he had made of Bigfoot tracks he'd come across two of the many thousands he had seen over many years in the Blue Mountains.

There Goes One Over There! Well ... Sure Looked Like One!

(**Jan. 20, 2000**) ... There's no doubt in my mind that all of us thought for a fleeting second or two that we had finally spotted a Bigfoot!

I mean, really !

There were four of us riding in Bill Laughery's car the other day and we had spent a couple hours cruising around the foothills on a scouting "look-see" for the elusive Sasquatch of these parts. So, by that lapse of time, we were maybe a bit more susceptible to the shout:

"There's one right now!"

We had been discussing the subject of our search most of the time while riding along. Laughery had just uttered words like: "You know, this is such prime ground we could see one just about any minute."

That's when Brian Smith, Walla Walla Bigfoot seeker, shouted his hair-standing words.

"Where?" the rest of us shouted at him.

"Right up there on the edge of the field.... Oh no, it's a hunter...!" That's about how fast our Bigfoot turned into a hunter as he emerged from the woodsy edging of the fall-seeded wheat field. As a matter of fact, his buddy, both attired in camouflage clothing, also appeared.

This sighting came as we neared the top of the grade driving up from Mill Creek on the Scenic Loop Road.

Laughery had ample reason for his statement. Late in January of 1995, Wes Sumerlin and I got the word that some party-goers one night had heard some "really weird noises" up where the loop drive tops out. For some reason, lots of people like to park there and drink beer, then toss the empties on the ground.

Wes and I checked that report out and found where tracks of three big-footed creatures had come from upper Mill Creek, headed downhill, sloping off across the side hill to where Meiners Road comes in and thence up that road toward the higher elevations.

Others checked out those tracks the next day and found some very interesting stuff, verifying evidence of an adult and two younger

ones, or two adults and one younger one. They also found some hair which has gone to labs with inconclusive results. This party included Laughery, Dar Addington, Paul Freeman, and Dave Been.

So, Laughery was within his rights by alerting us that we might find something like a Bigfoot "at any moment." The four of us might be making up the start of a renewed effort to bring this elusive, will-o-the-wisp creature to bay. We got a real shot in the arm the other day when we viewed some camcorder pictures Brian got about 2 a.m. on Jan. 2.

We met for coffee first at the Blue Mountain Mall, then over to my house to look at the Bigfoot footage of Brian's.

As Ray Sumerlin said at the mall (he'd seen the pictures earlier) ... "It sure looks like Brian's got something big, alright."

The rest of us ... Bill, Addington and myself ... were also impressed. And, so we fairly bolted out of the house to get into the foothills for some "scouting around." No tracks were found on this outing but we are all convinced that a regular approach to this thing in probably a fairly narrow scope of the mountains can pay off.

And, it could well do just that, given it's a routine even closely approaching that of Paul Freeman, the Forest Service patrol rider who reported having almost walked upon a Bigfoot up in the mountains in 1982. Freeman went on in the next 10 years to become a figure of controversy in the Bigfoot matter around here and he was to report a host of sightings of tracks, twisted trees, hair on trees and fences and even more sightings of the creature itself.

Fakery on his part?

Hoaxing on his part?

Not so, say many, although some will also tell tales of possible faking of tracks or even of Bigfoot itself.

This might even have some truth in a place or two, but it should be pointed out Paul Freeman did not "invent" the Bigfoot of this region or continue a fantasy of its being here.

This creature has been in the area only a few miles from Walla Walla and for many years before Freeman ever showed up here. Actually, my records show they have been a part of our regional history since 1900, where a sighting is recorded at Huntsville.

But, we have not had the heavy volume of Bigfoot reports since Freeman departed for the Washington west side a couple of years back. One very good reason for this is the fact that nobody since Freeman has taken the time to scout the hills like he did. The man was in the hills several days a week and kept excellent records of what he was seeing.

so could go to areas most likely to prove rewarding.

We might just have a successor to Freeman and his diligent, if fruitless, search to prove he'd seen something back in 1982.

Backed by modern gear ... night vision camcorder and computer for openers ... Brian Smith and his eagerness could fill the bill.

Bigfoot Reported Seen at 3 A.M. in Town of Starbuck

(**Feb. 3, 2000**) ... If you thought it was a thrill to read about a cougar coming into town (as was the case in Waitsburg recently) how about a Bigfoot in your backyard?!

Yes, that's right! A Bigfoot was spotted recently in the Starbuck city limits!

The person seeing the creature does not want his identity known so we go with the report we got from the Starbuck postmaster and a deputy, Rick Ferguson. Ferguson is well known here, making his home on Route 2, Waitsburg. His wife, Terry, is postmaster at Prescott.

According to Rick, the person who saw the bigfoot came into the post office later that day to report his experience. The sighting was about 3 a.m. last Thursday (Jan. 27) and the Starbuck resident (whose house is near the Tucannon River on the out skirts of town) started to go outside for an armload of wood. As he stepped outside it was then that he saw the Bigfoot, standing between the woodpile and a fir tree, about 20 feet away, Ferguson says.

The man bolted back inside the house and locked the door, remaining there until later, when it was business hours, then he came to the post office.

"He said the thing (Bigfoot) was seven feet tall, with grayish-brown hair," said Ferguson.

"He also said it was real muscular and walked upright."

Ferguson added that he had highest credibility ratings for his informant in the experience.

"I've known him since I came here as postmaster two years ago."

Ferguson also told me the Bigfoot spotter had been interviewed on the national Art Bell radio program, a show that deals with UFOs, Bigfoot and the paranormal. A state Bigfoot organization as well as a UFO-oriented group also interviewed the man, Ferguson said.

Bigfoot and the UFOs are sometimes inter-twined, some people have reported seeing them together or in the same vicinity on the same day.

A Richland man who has had considerable Bigfoot experience had this to say when I relayed the information above.

"That's the little one Wes (Sumerlin) and I saw in '95 on Blacksnake," responded Bill Laughery, Columbia County native and one time game department employee here. "It also sounded like the one reported only recently up here."

Laughery has been involved in more than one sighting of the creatures reported over the years in the local sections of the Blue Mountains. And, as to the chances of seeing one of the tall, hairy creatures in Starbuck, Laughery recalls when one of them was reported near the Little Goose dam site.

And, Starbuck is within easy loping distance (for a bigfoot) from Huntsville, WA. It was here in 1900 that a12-year-old girl saw a Bigfoot as she came out the back door of her family's house. When she screamed and ran back to the house, the Bigfoot turned and ambled back into the nearby foothills of the Blues. Adding to the Starbuck sighting story is the recent filming of some Bigfoot tracks January 2 by Brian Smith of Walla Walla. This was subject of my Times column of Jan. 20.

"About a week after I shot those pictures," Smith told me, when I reported the Starbuck sighting, "a neighbor of mine told me a man had told him he'd seen a Bigfoot on Blacksnake about where I took those pictures."

With heavy snows prevalent in the high places in the mountains, it just might be possible we are seeing a movement of these creatures in search of food. The fact they are around this time of year, bolsters a belief held by several Bigfoot buffs that there is a family of four or more in the mountains. This belief goes on to their possibly basing themselves in the Mill Creek Watershed, then emerging for the food foraging.

Foraging for spuds in a Starbuck garden ... ?

Take a Pair of Goats for Your Next Bigfoot Hunt

Goat ignores two Bigfoot tracks.

(FEB 17, 2000) ... A bunch of Walla Walla men have sort of taken the lead in running down this Bigfoot thing around here, but a woman is right up there with them, heading into the hills every chance she gets.

Dar Addington of Walla Walla uses a motorized vehicle to reach some of her Bigfoot prowling but she is the only one around here who uses pack goats.

That's right ... the trained goat you own or rent to do your gear packing when you want to hike the woodsy trails but not be burdened by a pack on your back. The goat does it for you and those who have turned to this animal say it's a lot better than a horse, llama or whatever.

Oh, oh! I'm sure to hear from a couple of those.

Dar and her husband, Mark, got into this goat thing about 10-12

years ago but it was before that that Dar got interested when on a trip to Switzerland. Now, the Addingtons are recognized with highest marks in the goat-breeding world. They train the goats and rent or sell them to the hikers.

And, maybe to some who believe they too can track down the elusive Bigfoot!

A few lines about this unique pack animal, then we'll get into the Bigfoot stuff.

The goats Dar raises can easily pack 40-50 pounds (the bucks, that is) and will browse on a wide variety of plant life in the hills, so there's no need to pack in a lot of food for them. Besides, Dar says they'll go three days without food or water.

And, a goat will travel eight or ten miles a day in steep country but can do 15 or 20 miles in level going, or about what the human will want to do in ease. There's no problem here for an Addington goat as Dar breeds hers for long and stout legs.

Two people on a hike would likely want to take a couple of the goats, Dar says.

Dar says she likes the Alpine breed best but it's not the biggest of the goat breeds.

"Wes (Sumerlin) always liked the Saanen best," Dar recalled of the late Bigfoot tracker. "While the Alpine will be ahead of a string on the trail, the Saanen will be bringing up the rear, plodding along." Sumerlin, it might be noted here too, was owner of several horses and used them for his packing business. But, he admired the abilities of Dar's goats.

A Bigfoot enthusiast almost since she got into the pack goat business, Dar say that whenever a sighting of Bigfoot tracks is heard of, she and Mark will head for the site.

"Mark's regular week-day job is pretty demanding and he isn't a hiker much, so I usually head out with a goat and my Sasquatch kit, while Mark stays at the truck," Dar says.

Besides food and cameras, the goats also pack the "Sasquatch kit," something no serious Bigfooter should be without, it might be noted.

"The goat is the best way to go looking for a Bigfoot or tracks," Dar says. "At least it sure is for me, because I always want my Sasquatch kit with me...plaster, water, towels to wrap the cast in later, kneeling pads (like women use in the garden) a garden trowel and a

steel stake to tie up my goat.

"Once a goat stepped right in a fresh plaster cast I'd made of a footprint."

How often does Dar get out to look for Bigfoots?

"We go all the time," she quickly responded. "Two or three times a week we might be up touring Blacksnake and Biscuit ridges in the summer and hit the Five Points region a couple times a week."

For you who seek the Bigfoot, or just want a good mountain outing, these sites are good suggestions to seek out. Take the Biscuit Ridge Road past the school at Dixie and head upstream along Dry Creek to the top.

Dar has accompanied her male Bigfoot buffs on several joint jaunts to the hills ... and the side hills! And, she has learned well the techniques of tracking and making plaster casts of the tracks she finds. Besides Sumerlin, her teachers have included Paul Freeman, Bill Laughery, Dave Been and Roger Thornton. All are recognized for their contribution to the Bigfoot of the Blue Mountains experiences.

So, if you want to make your next Bigfoot hunt (or other mountain trip) easier ... just take two goats.

And call Dar, not me!

A Long, Long Look at a Bigfoot!

(**May 4, 2000**) ... Except for the 1967 filming by Roger Patterson, there is not much to support belief in the existence of a Bigfoot, other than the telling of experiences by persons claiming to have seen one.

And, there are thousands of such experiences that would fill a big book on the subject.

A lot of those experiences have come in recent years from the Blue Mountains and especially in the high country just a few miles east of Dixie, a town of a couple hundred people on U.S. Highway 12, some 10 miles east of Walla Walla.

This column has recounted many of those stories, related by the observers and they are a part of the cloth into which is woven the documentation for a Bigfoot in these parts. We have interviewed many who were firm disbelievers before their experience but are now firmly entrenched on the side of the believers in this creature .

A most unique interview was done the other day when Bill Laughery and I met the man who had a long, long look at one and right up close. The distance separating man and beast was close enough that features and expressions on the Bigfoot's face were plain for the observer. Bill had heard of the man's encounter and convinced him he should tell it for a reporter to do a story. Convincing the man to meet us on the Blacksnake Ridge road recently was not easy but the story needed telling so he agreed.

"But no name," the man asked, recounting some of the ridicule he had received when a story of his encounter leaked to his "buddies." So, we've gone along with that and he suggested the nickname of "Jack the Logger." What Jack had to say about the Bigfoot he met on the mountain road with a truckload of logs makes for one of the best Bigfoot stories I've yet recorded.

His trip that afternoon off the mountain, headed towards Dixie, was to prove the highlight for Jack of some 45 years of trucking logs.

Jack probably knows more about Blacksnake and Biscuit ridges

than most people. He said he makes two or three trips per day when he's hauling logs and this counts a lot of days when he has to put on chains at the top, and take them off when he gets out of snow.

And, Jack could probably give a pretty good count of deer and elk in those parts as well.

But, these days ... ever since the late November of 1998 ... he has been eying the landscape for Bigfoots!

Jack first spotted the Bigfoot when it was seen on an open slope some three fourths of a mile away, but he didn't realize what the moving object was. Jack says he estimated about where on the road he would likely cross its path.

"All that time, I'm wondering what kind of animal it was," he said. "It never entered my mind that it was going to be a Bigfoot."

As his rig came into the curve at the end of a long grade in the road, the two met, with only about 40-45 yards separating them!

"As I got there and saw him," Jack said, " I stopped my truck and shut off the motor. He was standing there in a heavy, tufted grassy area, just standing and looking at me. We both eyeballed each other real good.

"Pretty soon ... I was close enough I could see his facial expressions ... he didn't look like an ape in the face, more like man features but hairy in the face. I would say he had a nose but not much. The skin was black and his hair color was like this (and he pulls a smoky-blue ski hat out of his truck cab). He was about this color and had gray hairs showing like an old dog will get around his nose.

"Anyway, while he was standing there, the expression on his face changed three or four times. That led me to believe that man may not be the only animal that has reasoning. This old boy was thinking and every time he'd go to a different train of thought, his expression would change."

Bill asked if Jack could see its eyes.

"I wasn't really interested in that," Jack said. "I was looking at the width of his shoulders and his height, wondering what the hell was going to happen!"

How wide was the Bigfoot?

"He was a good yard or more through the shoulders and I've had

people tell how a Bigfoot is about eight foot tall ... well, this dude was taller than eight feet and closer to nine feet tall.

"When you're that close it's no problem to figure out how big it was. And, he never made any effort to run from me. He never acted like he was scared ... I sure know he wasn't scared of ME ... not a bit!"

"Then he turned and walked along this way (Jack simulated a limping gait) like something was wrong with one leg, like he had an old injury or someone had shot him. Then he stopped and turned and looked at me for another full minute before he left ... didn't run ... he just walked over to the edge of the brush that dropped off steeply into the Dry Creek north fork.

"There was no getting around it ... this was not any man-made object or a man dressed up, there isn't a man in this county big enough to wear that suit!"

Jack says this sighting was his first Bigfoot encounter although several years ago he "saw something that I thought was a bear standing up.. always thought it was a Bigfoot but could find no sign.

"But this time, it's different... absolutely no doubt about it. I would pull $50 out of my own pocket though, if one of you guys could have been there with me."

Jack told us more about his initial reluctance to come forth with a report of what he'd encountered nearly two years ago.

"I didn't know whether to say anything to anyone about this ... you know, if I'd go downtown and tell the guys I saw a Bigfoot they'd laugh me clear out of the place.

"I told my wife about it and she kind of had her doubts about it for awhile, but she knew I wasn't going to come in with some kind of cock-and-bull story to take a ridiculing over."

"But, I don't really care what people think ... I just didn't talk about it, except with someone who has seen a Bigfoot or is a serious believer. They can believe what they want, but I'm the one who knows what I saw ... they can say there is no such thing but they don't have anything to back that up and I do."

"This thing was the closest to a real human than anything I've seen on television or real life ... his body is proportioned more to a human than anything I've ever seen. He's not like an ape. This dude walked like a man and somehow acts like a man. He walked like he was crippled in the right leg or foot."

"I'll tell you this much, too: I've never seen anything like it, before or since. He's a one-of-a-kind for me!"

This story would have ended right here but the man who experienced the long, long look has given permission to use his name. In a telephone conversation in December, 2001, the man related some highlights of his most unique day of a long log-hauling career in the Blue Mountains.

The name of the log truck driver who stared down a Bigfoot at close range is Jack Fine, long-time resident of Dayton, Wash., located some 30 miles east of Walla Walla. Fearful of ridicule at first, Fine has elected to come forth and become known.

"I don't care now if you use my name," he said. "I know what I saw and that's just plain all there is to it!"

Fine added a few things I thought worth inserting here as well.

"Some people have said this Bigfoot thing looks like an ape, but not me! This guy looks like a man and a mighty big man, too! ...and big all the way, from his head to his toes. And, this old boy looks strong enough to pick up the biggest ape going and shake it to pieces!"

Harking back to the day he and the Bigfoot just stared at each other at close range, Fine said:

"I under-played the thing when I talked to you that day on Biscuit Ridge," Fine said. "That Bigfoot didn't act like he was one bit afraid ... seemed rather blase, really ... and he was a helluva lot bigger than other people who have seen a Bigfoot have described."

When Fine gave me the permission to use his name he also said he was willing to be interviewed later in the month by a British TV crew which was to be in the area at that time.

The "Human-ness" of Bigfoot
A Neglected Clue in Research

When I wrote the preceding column reciting the experience of a logging truck driver with a Bigfoot, the story elicited the following highly interesting response from a long-time Bigfoot researcher for many years, Bobbie Short of San Diego. She has compiled an extensive data log of information about this elusive creature. Here is her response to my "Logger Jack" story:

Dear Vance,

A response to your featured article was triggered within me as I read through your recounting of Logger Jack's unique experience with a sasquatch. Witnesses often relate the humanness of these creatures.

Several years ago I began taking heavy stock of this much-neglected clue. It is, as I was to discover, a very important piece of overlooked evidence I call the 'human factor."

Prior to that time I had fallen victim - albeit brief, to the much heralded ape hypothesis presumptively deduced by the U.S. Scientific camp as a truth but eyed suspiciously by Vietnamese, Chinese and Russian hominologists.

The U.S. scientific stance on the ape theory subsequently was published as a comparative to simian or pongid classifications - interestingly enough told by men who have never seen that which they examine!

How scientific is it and where is the objectivity in such pronouncements? You cannot call it a "pony ride" without the horse.

Apes do not walk upright, they are quadrupeds. The sasquatch is bipedal. Under the genus as it is written today, the sasquatch cannot be labeled an ape. There is no supportive evidence that any ape, including Gigantopithecus blackii ever evolved to walk upright. If they did, as it has been written, why haven't the descendants of Gigantopithecus ever walked upright? Because they didn't. It's that simplistic. Russell Ciochon wrote in "Origins" that Gigantopithecus was a mega-herbivore

that probably lolled about all day shoveling vegetation down his throat by the hands full. This conjures up a visual of the mountain gorilla not our omnivorous sasquatch.

Logger Jack's expression of the words, "I was close enough I could see his facial expressions. He didn't look like an ape in the face, more like man features but hairy in the face," once again support what I have long suspected, which is, the sasquatch cannot be an ape. If you take a 'scientific moment' to mentally remove the hair from the sasquatch, what you have is far more anthropomorphic than pongid right down to the footprints. Even Grover Krantz is hairy in the face and walks upright. Do we classify him an ape?

Driven by curiosity, I ran a check through my growing database and was amazed to see the statistical data it reveals. Seven in ten reports contained some degree or idiosyncrasy of speech indicative of human characteristics in the sasquatch. The very earliest reports from Native Americans and First Nation Canadians called the creature "man." How then did the North American researcher fall into the ape theory chasm when there is overwhelming evidence to the contrary?

I don't pretend to know what this creature is, even though my encounter was closer than Logger Jack's. For now, ! just refer to sasquatch as a 'neither-nor' and hope in my life time science will chance upon a specimen which will support what I've long suspected. I don't believe the sasquatch/bigfoot is a half-witted ape, but something else, an order of cryptid brand new to us all and perhaps astonishing to science. This isn't to say that I believe the same holds true of the orang pendek or the yeti, these may very well be of simian characteristics.

I enjoyed your timely account of the Logger Jack story, Vance. It gave me the opportunity to disclose my frustrations with the lack of objectivity portrayed by the North American scientific points of view. The scientific community in China, Vietnam and Russia are far more unbiased in their perspective, which is, as it should be.

Thank you once again, the witness you interviewed echoes many reports with the same comments; adding more credence to that which I've lone suspected.

Bobbie Short

Bigfoot Tracker Found Tracks and Much More!

Brian Smith, left, shows Keuterville Bigfoot cast to Sheryl Jenkins

(Sept. 7, 2000) ... When he headed out of town, headed for Keuterville, Idaho, Walla Walla Bigfoot tracker Brian Smith had no idea what he'd find there.

First of all, where in the world is Keuterville?

"It's a ways from Grangeville," Smith told his buddies at the Bigfoot coffee hour the other day. By the way, for Bigfoot enthusiasts and/or coffee drinkers, that session is each Wednesday at 9 a.m., at the Blue Mountain Mall's dining area.

Grangeville being some 175 miles easterly of Walla Walla, it meant Smith had a long drive ahead of him to check out a report of not only tracks found of the elusive creature but also reports of someone having seen the thing and lots of people still hearing things at night.

So, as he wended over US 12 for much of his way, Smith at least had in mind he might just be getting closer to solving this Bigfoot mystery which has been building up pretty good in recent years. For Smith, it has been an on again, off again thing this year, starting with

his finding tracks in the snow in the mountains on Jan. 2. He has found other tracks since then and there have been Bigfoot sightings, too.

Smith went to Keuterville at the suggestion of Dr. Jeffrey Meldrum, Idaho State U. biological sciences professor. Meldrum has been a scientist deeply involved in tracking down the mystery of Bigfoot. Not too many scientists have done so. Grover Krantz, former WSU anthropology teacher, is the noteworthy exception.

Meldrum had received a report that a teenaged youth ("No name, please!") had recently spotted some tracks. This sighting, the boy said, was "a year to the day" when he and his sister had seen a Bigfoot, at near range (just a few feet away) as it squatted in the brush. The boy says he got a pretty clear look at the creature's face ("it's dark in color").

When Smith got to the scene he found one good track and made a cast of it to send to Meldrum in Pocatello. The foot measures 14 inches long and is about seven inches wide at the toes, Smith says. He further noted that when Meldrum saw photographs of the track he was "pretty excited."

The cast has in it what appear to be dermal ridges, the feature of the Bigfoot tracks made by the creature Paul Freeman saw in June 1982 at the top of the Tiger Canyon road above Mill Creek. Smith said Meldrum was further "highly interested" in other features of the footprint found at Keuterville.

In his investigation, Smith turned up some more interesting features of the Keuterville sighting. He said the un-named youth had found other tracks but no more in mud where they could be easily cast. The entire area has been under intense investigation and local residents report hearing "weird" sounds.

Smith said the youth had also found what appeared to be a huge "nest" or "bedding down place." He said the boy told him he had crawled inside the affair (apparently shaped from brush and grasses) and found there a clump of hair, orange-red in color.

The original cast Smith made at Keuterville has been forwarded to Meldrum for his scrutiny under laboratory conditions for further analysis.

In the meantime, Smith's foot cast is getting a lot of attention at the Bigfoot coffee sessions at the mall.

Smith has been a regular driver of the ridges above Dixie and other likely Bigfoot sighting areas in the Blue Mountains near Walla Walla. Logging activity in the upper reaches of Biscuit and Blacksnake ridges might have "spooked out" some of the critters, Smith feels, but

those two places continue to rate high on a listing of likely Bigfoot sighting places.

About this Keuterville resident's reluctance to reveal his name in reports of the Bigfoot ... this is nothing new. It also is certainly the reason more sightings are not reported. The fear of ridicule is strong in people on such matters. Bigfoot researchers for years have asserted that it is this fear of ridicule that has kept more ... a lot more ... information about Bigfoot hidden by many witnesses of Bigfoot.

A recent example appeared in this column when I related the story (considered one of the finest examples of Bigfoot anecdotes) about the Bigfoot sighting by a logging truck driver coming off Biscuit Ridge above Dixie. It was more than two years before he'd talk to a reporter about it and then he was adamant that his name not be used.

What it will take to overcome this reluctance to step forward and tell what one sees, is likely to be a sighting which simply cannot be ignored.

And that is going to be something ... for Bigfoot has been sighted many, many times in the Walla Walla Blues over the years ... at least since 1900 ... but none have been such that they can't be ignored ... even if it's by a logging truck driver, sitting in his truck, motor shut off, getting a long, hard look at a Bigfoot from 40 yards away. While it looked him over, then ambled off into the brush and out of sight.

AND BY THE WAY ... anyone seeing a Bigfoot or signs indicating same, give Smith a phone call him at 509-529-7379 in Walla Walla. Just ask for "Brian." He is Walla Walla representative for the North American Ape Project.

These Tracks Were Found Near Downtown Walla Walla

(**Jan. 11, 2001**) --- Reports of a huge manlike footprints being found 8-10 miles above Walla Walla on Mill Creek have been fairly common in recent years.

But, thanks to the recent snow of mid-December, we have a report of Bigfoot tracks in the vicinity of Rooks Park a short distance above the community college campus!

And, there were two sets of tracks, too, as if an adult and a youngster walked the path.

They were spotted by Harley Michaelis, 26 S. Roosevelt St., as he and a friend walked the Constitutional Path along the stream. This path begins at the Three Mile bridge on Tausick Way and terminates at Rooks Park. Here's the report Michaelis made about his find of the big tracks.

"A friend and I regularly walk the Mill Creek Constitutional Path. We broke a path after the recent snow and as usual, hoofed it to Rooks Park.

"Friday, after scanning the creek for birds going up, coming back we began to notice some large, regularly-spaced footprints in the snow. They were particularly prominent in the area just west of the big foot bridge by the park. They were large, 18 to 20 inches long, 9 to 10 inches or so wide, and heavily compressed the snow. The stride was on the order of four feet in a biped pattern. The tracks lacked any footwear tread. Rather, there was a distinct pattern of large, bare toes, ball, arch and heel of the foot.

"The prints were noticed just off the paved path on the creek side. They went from the metal bridge by the Corps (of Engineers) office to the bridge at Rooks Park. Where seen, the tracks were uniformly spaced.

"If this was a hoax, whoever perpetrated it had to have extreme stamina to do the long strides, weigh about 800 pounds and be foolishly running around in 20 degree weather wearing 'bigfoot' slippers.

"Oh, whatever made the large tracks had a companion. The

adjacent barefoot prints were smaller, more round, made a similarly deep impressions with about a two foot stride in a bid-pedal fashion . Prints made by humans made shallower depressions."

Brian Smith, Walla Walla Bigfoot tracker, who heads up a local search organization, searched the area extensively, on both sides of the creek. He found evidence to back up the Michaelis report, despite the time lag of several days.

"I found tracks across the creek (from the path where Michaelis saw the tracks) and close to the dam," Smith said.

Some Commentary About Reporting Bigfoot Tracks

(**Feb. 1, 2001**) -- This matter of reporting Bigfoot tracks or other evidence of possible Bigfoot activity is likely to draw ridicule, although the chances have gone down in recent years. And, if one should actually see one of the elusive creatures and reports it, the scale of ridicule can go up.

Sometimes considerably.

The 1982 reporting of a Bigfoot by a Walla Walla US Forest Service patrol rider cost him his job and altered his entire life, as well as that of his family members .

That ridicule factor has been diminishing in the past two decades but it remains. Mention of the Bigfoot subject will likely bring a smile, raised eyebrows or even loud guffaws. Why people sometimes react that way is unknown to me. Possibly a psychiatrist has an answer.

Not me!

So, following the Dec. 15 (2000) sighting of large human-like footprints in the snow near Rooks Park, I did a follow-up with the sighter of same, Harley Michaelis, 26 E. Roosevelt, Walla Walla.

Mostly I asked what had been the reaction from others since the Jan. 11 article we did in The Times. He told of reaction at the time he was looking at the tracks that day.

"I pointed out the tracks to one fellow on the path (along Mill Creek from Tausick Way to Rooks Park) and also to another group," he said.

"They all guffawed, although the clear evidence was right in front of their noses. What they privately thought of it later may have been another matter. These fellows were all strangers to me.

"Martin Scott had not noticed the tracks that day, but when I asked him later, he suggested mentioning them to you."

Did Michaelis have any fears of ridicule if he talked to a reporter?

"No, since Martin had indicated you would be interested," he

answered, "I did not fear any ridicule from you. Further, had the U-B used the material (he had given them) I was not concerned about ridicule. I just reported what I saw and really did not care what others thought about it."

What about others who see things like this reporting same?

"Sure. I think anyone seeing something so out of the range of normal experience should report it to add to the body of evidence.

"But, I suppose many have a fear of being thought as nuts."

Nobody has called him so far since the article appeared in The Times, he said.

However, when he mentioned the sighting of the tracks (nearly a mile of them paced at 48 inches apart) he got some reaction, he noted.

"I mentioned it to a few friends and the reaction was essentially raised eyebrows," he said.

How about others having seen something unusual?

"I mentioned it to John Carlyle, who is quite a fisherman. He says he knows some farmer who has a patch of land that the deer and elk will not cross. Rather, they always skirt it. He also said the farmer reports ignition difficulties with equipment when in that area."

I queried Michaelis on what he thought of Bigfoot tracker Brian Smith having found large tracks on the other side of Mill Creek from where Michaelis had seen his.

"I thought it was interesting that Brian could corroborate my experience by finding some tracks across the creek. I saw nothing on the road on the south side, but it was packed down from vehicle traffic on a project at the dam.

"Thinking that something may have walked west on the road there from the brushy area, helped make sense to the tracks suddenly starting on the north side of the bridge by the Corps of Engineers office and extending east ... yes, for eight tenths of a mile and the tracks were continuous, uniform, evenly-spaced, heavy, bipedal, bare, non-human. Hardly an isolated and incidental sighting of something that may have been misconstrued as a large foot print."

In closing remarks, Michaelis observed:

"I'm not motivated to prove anything (with this report). It was just an interesting experience. I'm glad to talk about it, if it is helpful to anyone and I'm keeping an eye out during my regular walks up the path.

"I'm surprised that the tracks appeared so close to town. There's just gotta be something to it as they were there, plain to see!"

Brian Smith Takes Lead In Using High Tech Gear

(**April 26, 2001**) ... A chance to "sit a spell" with Brian Smith of Walla Walla was to get caught up a bit on what's going on around here with the Bigfoot situation.

Well, we learned there has been some activity since the sighting around mid-December near Rooks Park on Mill Creek of nearly a mile of big footprints by Harley Michaelis of Walla Walla.

Smith is a leader of the group of local people who have taken more than a passing interest in this Bigfoot thing around here. While others have been involved in this for many years, his is the first efforts at utilizing so much that is now available in electronic gear.

A video camera is a point to make at the outset. Smith doesn't go into the woods without one.

So, since late February-early March, Smith has video taped more than 40 big tracks in an area that proved as fruitful a year ago: at the top of Blacksnake Ridge above Dixie, a town 10 miles east of Walla Walla.

"They come out of South Dry Creek," he says, "then drop off into Blue Creek. The tracks were about 16 inches long and had a 54-inch stride."

A week later, Smith was investigating the report of a woman having seen a Bigfoot as it sauntered across an open side hill some 500 yards or so from her. This was while she was in a pickup truck with a couple of friends as they cruised the Blacksnake Ridge road on the lookout for elk sign.

"The party in the truck stopped to use their binoculars to look for elk," Smith recounted from the woman's report of the incident. "She said that as they stopped and her friends were looking with their binoculars for elk, she looked the other way and saw the Bigfoot as it walked across the open hillside.

"She said she saw it walking for some time as it strode along, struck an old logging road, then stepped over it and went into the brush, and out of sight. She says she saw it clearly enough that she recalls the pronounced stride and swinging of the arms as it walked along.

"She also says it was at least eight feet tall and certainly was a Bigfoot and not a bear. And, she said it was brownish black in color.

"Then, she turned to her two friends and shouted: 'Hey, I just saw a Bigfoot!' But, they just brushed her off and kept on looking for elk on their side of the pickup. And missed seeing something that was more exciting than an elk!"

This sighting drew the interest of a team of people dedicated to learning the secret of Bigfoot, along with some TV people to film the area for an upcoming documentary, Smith said.

Two weeks after the pickup truck sighting, the North American Ape Project (NAAP) was on the scene, Smith says. This group has been organized by Jeff Meldrum and Idaho State University, he added. The team was accompanied by TV personnel from "Dateline Discovery" and the "Today Show," Smith noted.

Members of the field research team, besides Dr. Meldrum, included Ron Brown, Derek Randall, Leroy Fish, John Pickering and Smith, the local contact and representative covering this area. All are woods savvy and good trackers as well as having a keen interest in solving this mystery.

While the team wound up being unable to get to the spot where the Bigfoot was said to have walked, they were not without some success, Smith said.

"A highlight of the trip," Smith said, " was to go to the spot on Blacksnake where the pickup truck had stopped to check for elk and at where the woman had so clearly seen the Bigfoot. It was walking in what is known as Laird Canyon, some privately-owned land and we hadn't been able to gain access to it.

"However, using strong binoculars (and it had snowed the night before) we were able to easily pick up (new) tracks in the snow right where the Bigfoot had walked when the woman saw it before!"

Sounds like possibly a migratory route for the critter.

Besides their extra-powerful binoculars, the Bigfoot team has available third generation "Starlight" monoculars that can pick up moving objects in total darkness, Smith commented. And, at 500-600 yards distance, too.

Smith has some "cam tracker" cameras set out which take a photographwhen the triggering mechanism is tripped by motion, day or night. Now, they have added phernomes or disks, which have an odor, said likely to attract male Bigfoots to a site, like where a cam tracker is located, he said.

Winds carry the disks' scent for miles to bring in the animals, it is hoped.

Some idea of the potential of the pheromone disks is that they were used in the recent incident at Skookum, Wash., where plaster casts of portions of a sizable human-like body have been made. The scented disks were used along with a bait of fruits which are felt to have brought in the Bigfoot to an elk wallow where it also wallowed, resulting in the casts.

Hopefully, the same experience will occur here where Smith has placed his cam trackers.

So, what's next on the local Bigfoot scene?

"Well, right now it's pretty much a waiting game," Smith responded.

"We have some cam trackers in place, phernomes hanging about them, along with baits of fruit, so maybe we will get some action soon."

Readers with information they would like to report can contact Smith via e-mail at briansmi@webtv.net and by telephone at 509-529-7379.

We Find More Evidence of a Bigfoot Family in Our Area

(**June 28, 2001**) ... More evidence that a family of Bigfoots makes their home in the Blue Mountains near here was indicated in a recent sighting report.

It is once more the old story of those who see one of the creatures being unwilling to report the incident for fear of ridicule. This is a fear taken very seriously by a lot of people and the couple who reported their sighting is a part of that group of people. They finally did come forth, and we have the story, but we have to do it with fictitious names.

We'll call the couple Pete and Karen.

Karen and Pete were driving the Jasper Mountain Road and were about nine miles from U. S. Highway 12 when it happened. The time was sometime in October last year. Karen grew up in the Walla Walla area but had been gone for some 30 years, so this was some more of what she and Pete had been doing: "getting myself re-acquainted with my roots," she says.

Pete was driving and as they began to round a curve, a creature suddenly walked over a fence and strode rapidly across in front of them and into the brush. While Pete was driving, Karen was on the lookout for ruts. As the creature bounded past, Pete yelled:

"Elk?" and just as fast said: "No! What the hell's that?"

"That's when I looked up and the Bigfoot crossed the road right in front of us and went into the brush on the other side of the road," Karen says. "But, when Pete said, 'What the hell?' he saw it take one stride over the fence, step on the embankment and right across the road. And when I looked up and saw it pass in front of us, I screamed: 'Oh, my God, what was that?' but I knew exactly what it was."

Karen says they drove down the road a bit further and stopped.

"Pete wanted to go back and by then I was crying and I felt as if every fiber in my body was emitting a sensation," she says. "I was scared but knew that he was right, we had to go back and we did. He backed the truck into a little draw and he got out with a gun and a

flashlight. He went across the road where the Bigfoot had entered the brush and saw where in fact it had done this ... then he started over to the embankment and the fence. As he got closer to the fence, a deep, guttural sound came from over the fence and he went right up to the fence.

"Pete, did you hear that?" I said and he answered: 'Yes' and took a couple more steps and that's when I jumped out of the truck and ran over to Pete and shouted: 'Do not go over that fence!'

"But, he said that he needed to do so, but I said 'No, we have been warned' and we could hear the one that went across the road still over there, moving around in the brush. Then, another deep, guttural sound came from over the fence, followed by another sound from the one in the brush. I told Pete that call it my woman's instinct or whatever, but I think there's a baby still over the fence and its mama is in the brush behind us and they are warning us not to go over the fence.

"Pete finally saw it my way, although he didn't want to. But, I was very scared and knew we were in a crossfire so to speak.

"We then drove back to Walla Walla, sort of dumfounded and not speaking until we got home. "

When they did reach home Karen and Pete compared notes on their sighting to determine that what they had seen was what each recognized as a Bigfoot and each agreed that it was a female and was buckskin in color and would be about seven feet tall, with long hair, not shaggy, and Pete could also recall vividly the creature's "...long, lean muscles down its hip and legs and it made extremely long strides" getting across the roadway.

I queried Karen on the creature's coloring and she quickly responded she was "absolutely sure... 100 per cent!"

She also told me she knew instantly what they had seen because the creature had been a part of her family since her childhood. She added that she can't forget what her father had told her, either.

"These things are just a part of the woods, he had always told them," she said. "They are just like the bears, elk, deer ... they've always been here and always will be."

Her father is now deceased but his savvy of the Blue Mountains is legendary around here yet.

The next morning Karen and Pete returned to the scene of their Bigfoot crossing, mainly to learn if there would be any tracks to verify their sighting. There were.

"But, being the novices at this sort of thing," Karen admitted,we

didn't take along enough plaster so only got a single print (14 inches long) that of the big one that came across the fence.

"We went a bit further down the fence and found an eight-inch track where the little one came over after we left the night before.

"Pete is a very good tracker, having spent a lot of time in the mountains with some of the best, and he said he had a pretty good idea where they had gone, so we walked down the rocky, old logging road and a ways down it we came across another print in a mud hole among the rocks and more of them further down on the side of the road.

"We continued to walk along the old road and then, all of a sudden, everything got very still and quiet. When Pete asked me if I wanted to go further, I said "No" and before I could tell him what I was thinking, he said it: 'We are not alone.' I said, 'I know it, and we need to go back to the truck.'

"And we did just that ... quickly."

As she closed her comments about their experience, Karen observed: "I forgot to tell you, we are sure there were at least three different Bigfoots there that night, based on the prints we found the next day."

Karen and Pete are still taking drives out into the "boonies" so Karen can learn more about her "roots" but she is sure that meeting up with another family of Bigfoots as they round a curve in a lonely road still must be considered a possibility.

The Jasper Mountain anecdotal account is only one of several in our files that tell of a large Bigfoot and one or two smaller ones. This one has to rate as one of the most interesting.

Dogs Just Don't Want To Mess with a Bigfoot!

(**July 5, 2001**) ... The story you are about to read could well be one of the many Bigfoot accounts we've listened to and then again....I feel certain we are dealing with a Bigfoot here, despite the fact there is none that was observed in the account of the incident.

However, there is some strong evidence that it was precisely what the reporting person was dealing with at the time.

For openers, the person was a stranger to me, but he and his account struck instant rapport. He was born in Walla Walla and lives in Colville. I was born in Colville and now live in Walla Walla.

When I met John R. (Randy) French the other day it was to talk of many things, albeit mostly about Bigfoot.

French was willing to relate his Bigfoot experience and we got into that phase of our visit real fast. The UFO/alien matter came later and we might just make this a second installment.

French is a cousin of Brian Long, the Starbuck resident who in February 1999 came face to face with a Bigfoot in his backyard ...as we duly reported right here in these lines at the time. He and his Tucannon friend, Evelyn McGovern, brought French to visit and for French to pick up some more knowledge of this Bigfoot matter.

I can blame Long for that as he is convinced I have some Bigfoot info his cousin can use. Anyway, the story that French unfolded about his Bigfoot experience went like this:

The time is 1978 and the place is near the little town of Orient, WA, just a hoot and holler south of Canada on US 395. This isn't too far from the town of Bossburg, WA and a famous Bigfoot sighting of several years back, French and a friend were out for an evening drive when French gets "a call to nature."

He is standing in the brush at the side of the road tending to this bladder-inspired bodily function when he hears a sound the likes of which he had never before in all his years of hunting and fishing the wooded country around Colville.

It was a deep, very deep, guttural sound, a sort of "warning"

sound much like we reported here a couple weeks ago. Oddly enough that which I wrote about here was on Jasper Mountain between Waitsburg and Dixie and French's encounter was near another Jasper Mountain, this one near Orient!

Well, when he heard the sound and he's certain it came not from any animal he'd ever encountered, French and his friend decided they'd better head out of there and get back to town. In town, French told another friend, a guy who owned a massive German shepherd dog. The monster canine had whipped every dog for 20 miles around, French assured me. This dog would tackle anything and was used by its owner all the time for hunting, French told me.

"His name was Captain Hook and we just called him Hook." "He'd jump right up into the pickup bed, and he'd jump right out on command."

With Hook in the pickup, French and his friend drove to the site of the growling and warning sounds and stopped the truck. The dog remained in the bed, cowering in a corner!

No words of command would get the big dog to stir, either. "Finally, the owner just picked up Hook and placed him on the ground." French said, "but Hook just stayed right there at our feet, shaking with fear .... I could feel him as he was right up against my leg."

This was one scared dog which apparently had smelled the odor of whatever had growled its warning at French a few minutes before, he said.

French further reported that he and the dog owner found some big footprints and a tree that was newly twisted off.

As to the tracks, French says he tried to step in them and could almost step the distance they were apart but ended up doing the splits. "And whatever made those tracks stepped right over a log, going up hill."

This story has some of the usual Bigfoot narrations but it's the dog part that helps lend credibility to it all. In the several presentations I have made over the years about the Blue Mountains Bigfoot situation, invariably someone in the audience will ask the "dog" question.

"How about sending a dog to track the thing?" or something like it.

In my backlog of Bigfoot research there are several accounts involving dogs which indicate no desire on the part of the dog to go tracking when the Bigfoot's smell is around yet. In other words, what happened to Captain Hook on the northeast slopes of Jasper Mountain

in northern Washington is just what has been reported many times.

There was a sequel to the story, though, French said.

"Shortly after that incident, he said, "the owner took Hook hunting and he disappeared and has never been found. It was assumed Hook might have taken up with another hunter or something."

Or, the Bigfoot was still in the vicinity?

Two Bigfoot Sightings Reported In Two-week Period in October

Brian Smith at Five Points

(Oct. 18, 2001) -- Lay aside any thoughts the Bigfoot issue around here is a dead one!

True, reports of any activity have been skimpy for some time but now we have two sightings in the nearby Blue Mountains within 14 days, Oct. 1 and Oct. 14 to pin them down.

Both reports have been given us by Brian Smith, the Walla Walla representative for the North American Ape Project. This fairly new Bigfoot-oriented organization, geared up with modern electronic devices, is headed up by Dr. Jeffrey Meldrum, anthropology professor at Idaho state University.

It was to test out and utilize some of that modern stuff that Smith ran into a Bigfoot on the Mill Creek road in the Kooskooskie summer cabin area late Saturday, Oct. 14. Make that 'ran into' being nearly literally and figuratively as the creature he reported seeing dashed across the road in front of his vehicle. He was heading up into the mountains to broadcast some previously recorded Bigfoot vocalizations, he said. The time was around 10:30 p.m., Oct. 14, he

noted.

"It came across the road about 50-60 feet in front of us," he related, "going real fast, one step was on the side of the road, the next was in the middle and the third step he was on the other side and dashing off into the area where some cabins were located."

Smith was not the only one in the road at that point.

"Another car was coming towards me and must have been within 30 or 40 feet of the thing," Smith said. "They came to a stop, but soon went on, apparently not wanting to stop to talk about the happening."

Smith said the Bigfoot was brown in color and at least eight feet tall.

For Smith, this sighting makes three Bigfoots he has seen. His first experience came some 14 years ago at Squaw Spring on Skyline Drive when he saw two Bigfoots at the same time, a sighting in mid summer.

Smith's other recent sighting report occurred Oct. 1 around 6 p.m., but wasn't reported to him for two weeks, he noted. This one occurred about four or five miles above Five Points on Blacksnake Ridge, he said. A woman, owner of a cabin in the upper reaches of Blacksnake Ridge, and her son were headed up to the cabin when she spotted what she first thought was a cow on the side of the road.

At first she thought it was a cow because it was reddish in color, he said. "She said the thing was sitting on the road embankment, eating berries or something. When I checked out the site I found a big pile of rose hips discards."

Smith said the woman's son was doing the driving and she was the passenger.

"She said that as they neared the thing sitting there on the bank, they passed it only about 10 to 15 feet distance from it, Smith related. "She said as they slowly went past the creature, she looked it right in the eye, but the Bigfoot just ignored her and continued eating his rosehips."

Smith said the woman described the Bigfoot as being "very broad, with a head shaped like that of a baboon's."

"She also said she had heard a lot about Bigfoots but had never figured she would ever see one," Smith added.

Smith also reminded that this sighting on Blacksnake is the second Bigfoot reported in that area in the past year.

The Walla Walla representative for the North American Ape Project also reminds that persons who have sightings they'd like investigated should contact him. His phone is (509) 529-7379.

Section Three

The Researchers Speak

Many Have Investigated Walla Walla Bigfoot Country and Leave Area Convinced it's Here

The northern Blue Mountains of SE Washington State have meant a lot of things to many people but none certainly more fascinating than the mystery of Bigfoot and its apparent liking for the region.

This fascination for this favored habitat of the Walla Walla Bigfoot is held by many, no small number of which are those from the ranks of the scientific fields as well as amateur researcher who elect to take serious this Bigfoot issue.

We count in these categories the scientist who has come here and then left but thoroughly convinced "there has to be something out there." We won't go into any name-dropping mode right now, but before this section of this book is closed we hope to tell about many of these from the scientific arena of this drama.

We further have counted among those who have visited and those who have lived here and who have had a strong interest in the subject over several years. These people include those from many walks of life, some who earn their living in these mountains and spend a lot of time there. There are others (like the men and women who enjoy the hunt for Bigfoot as they ply their talents at tracking) who have held to just as strong a fascination. They, too, feel the evidence strongly supports a Bigfoot here. Among these are certainly the giant Paul Freeman, employed in 1982 by the U.S. Forest service as a patrol rider for the Mill Creek Watershed. One day, when he encountered at close hand a Bigfoot while on patrol, Freeman duly reported the incident and his entire life changed as he steadfastly held to his belief that he knew he had truly seen one of the animals. Freeman was not any stranger to the backcountry, having been a part of that environment since he ran his own fur-trapping operation as a 12-year-old.

It is our hope to include the thinking of many of these people as well in these pages.

Among those of the scientific field who have accepted the Blue Mountains as a prime land for Bigfoot is Dr. Jeffrey Meldrum, anatomy and anthropology professor at Idaho State University, Pocatello, Idaho.

Now considered one of the top personalities involved in the Bigfoot search, that was not the case just a few years ago.

As a matter of fact, five years ago, Dr. Meldrum was probably as good a skeptic of the whole thing as any of his scientific peers, most of who continue today to be included in the list of disbelievers.

But, five years ago, when he investigated a long string of Bigfoot tracks in the Blue Mountains in 1996, Dr. Meldrum did an about- face on the subject, declaring that the many fresh tracks he was examining certainly indicated strongly that it was ludicrous to suggest the sizable, human-like footprints had been faked.

Dr. Meldrum went from that point in his life and (and career) to become as recognized as any one on the subject. This recognition comes forth in an excellent story which appeared in the Jan. 14, 2001, editions of The Denver Post. To present the story of Dr. Meldrum and his experiences with the Walla Walla Bigfoot story as well as other work he has done in this field, the Post's fully authorized story is herewith given.

Legend of Bigfoot Put to Test

Skepticism Ended For Scientist In Blue Mountains Researching

By Theo Stein
Denver Post Environment Writer
Jan. 14, 2001

All things considered, 2000 was a rather big year for Bigfoot researchers.

Dr. Jeffrey Meldrum
(Photo courtesy of Ron Brown)

In April, two fly fishermen reported huge, humanlike footprints 7 miles apart along the banks of Colorado's Eagle River. Bill Heicher, a wildlife biologist at the Colorado Division of Wildlife, evaluated the evidence and drew two conclusions: The tracks weren't faked, and they weren't made by a bear. Says Heicher: "It's no animal that we know of."

In August, two hikers, forced by a storm to camp in high wilderness north of Crested Butte emerged with quite a tale. They said they had been shadowed for two nights by at least one Bigfoot that peered into their camp and approached their tent.

On Sept. 22, a team of researchers found a huge body imprint in a mud wallow in the Cascade Range of western Washington State. Several researchers, including a physical anthropologist at Idaho State University who examined a plaster cast of the Cascade imprint, said the impression -- of a hairy forearm, thigh, buttock and heel - was not made by any creature known to science.

Of course, claims of encounters with an elusive, hairy giant have been the stuff of leg end for more than a century.

Could such a creature exist?

An eclectic assortment of scientists and academics is testing the proposition that Bigfoot isn't a myth but an ice age survivor that has managed to persist just outside the vision of Western science. Drawing on each other's disciplines, these researchers are sharing information and applying sophisticated forensic techniques as never before.

Many experts want conclusive evidence.

Still their work is greeted with skepticism - if not downright hostility.

For most biologists and anthropologists, no evidence short of a carcass or bones will suffice. "Most people in my field would need the beyond-the-shadow-of-a-doubt kind of proof," said Walter Hartwig, an anthropology professor who is editing a book on primate fossils for Cambridge University Press and who studies extinct South American monkeys.

"They want to see the body. I'm confident enough that it's going to happen. We're not naming new mammals in North America, and that's because we've exterminated most of them."

Michael Shermer, publisher of the magazine Skeptic, is even harsher. "If you believe in Bigfoot, you most likely believe in the Loch Ness monster, the lost continent of Atlantis, whatever."

Despite such views, a few investigators are expanding their efforts in the wake of new discoveries, using scent, sound and food baits, thermal imagers and remote camera stations to gather more convincing evidence. Last year, they received support from an unexpected source: a Texas police fingerprint expert who has worked on more than 300 cases for the FBI and the Drug Enforcement Agency. He says he has no doubt that at least some alleged Bigfoot footprints were left by a large primate unknown to science.

"Being a crime-scene examiner, I have to be very careful about getting the facts right," said Jimmy Chilcutt, a Conroe, Texas, police forensics investigator. "But I knew after examining the prints that there's a real animal out there. The skin pattern is unique and consistent with itself. There's no doubt in my mind."

One of the few academic Bigfoot researchers is physical anthropologist Jeff Meldrum, an Idaho State University professor who

has examined hundreds of claimed footprints from Bigfoot, also called Sasquatch in the Northwest. Many he has rejected as hoaxes, others as misidentifications. But more than 100, he said, represent the trace of an unknown animal, with a big flat foot and five toes.

Meldrum's lab in Pocatello is crammed with typical academic paraphernalia. Posters of evolutionary trees festoon the walls, rubber models of ape feet and hands sit in a cabinet. Bulging bookshelves, charts and cabinets sit full of papers relating to this main area of study how our stiff, stub-toed running foot evolved from the flexible, grasping ape foot of our distant ancestors.

Long study convinces researcher of possibilities.

Rather than simply an enlarged human foot, Meldrum said, the Sasquatch foot displays a unique combination of recognizably different anatomic features to solve the problem of two-footed locomotion. The result is a proportionally wide, flatter appendage with long, flexible toes and a spring-loaded, ape-like hinge in place of our stiff arch.

"This animal's little toe is about the same length as my little finger," he said holding his hand up against the side of one of his casts. "This toe probably has the same grasping ability as my finger, too."

So far, Meldrum's theories have failed to gain even a toehold of acceptance with the anthropological establishment, which regards talk of Bigfoot as heresay. A reporter's question about Bigfoot so upset one prominent academic that he sputtered into a rage and quickly ended the conversation. Others politely declined interview requests.

But a few of Meldrum's peers admire his work and his pluck. Forensic anthropologist George W. Gill, a professor at the University of Wyoming, studied the Bigfoot phenomenon in the 1970s. A former director of the American Board of Forensic Anthropologists, Gill said the argument is simple: Either the most sophisticated hoax in the history of anthropology has gone undiscovered for centuries, or the big ape exists.

Another is Hartwig, who vouches for Meldrum's "rigorous" methods even as he questions his conclusions.

"Jeff has executed the model approach," said Hartwig, who is editing a book on human evolution to which Meldrum is contributing a chapter. "He's weeded out what he believes might be hoaxes or misidentifications. And for the ones he can't exclude, he's devised a theory for what those footprints represent. In a sense, it's beautiful and

well-controlled, inductive science. You may think it's far out, but methodologically speaking, he has toed the line very strictly. And, he's bold enough not to allow any outside pressure to direct his science."

What Meldrum and other researchers, professional and amateur, suggest is bold by any standard. They believe a few thousand of these powerful and intelligent creatures live widely dispersed in mountainous forest from the Pacific Coast to the Colorado Rockies and beyond. They believe the big apes are opportunistic omnivores, eating roots and berries when available, preying on deer and elk whenever possible. And they think Bigfoot are curious apes, often sneaking into the camps of people who have intruded in their territory, even stealing camp food when they can. So where's the body?

Bigfoot advocates say the main reason no one's found a body is that a dead animal decomposes quickly and completely. The carcass of a rare animal with no known predators would be almost impossible to find. By way of example, Colorado Division of Wildlife bear biologist Tom Beck says he's never found the remains of a bear that died a natural death.

Most anthropologists argue no Bigfoot corpse has ever been found because the animal doesn't exist

Convincing his peers to look at his collection of more than 100 footprints, knuckle prints and other trace evidence has been "without question the biggest obstacle," Meldrum said. "If someone takes the time to visit the lab, they are almost uniformly overwhelmed by the amount of data. Usually, they have no concept of the amount of evidence that's been collected."

Gill, the Wyoming professor, chides his colleagues for not taking a close look at research like Meldrum's. "Even if there's only a remote chance this animal is alive today, to think that anthropology is basically blowing off this stuff is disheartening."

Ron Westrum, a sociologist at Eastern Michigan State University, has studied how scientists have historically grappled with anomalies, or observations that are "contrary to law."

"Scientists who make these observations learn to shut up because other scientists will punish them," said Westrum. "These are really taboo topics in science, which is a reputational business. Your reputation is your career."

For these reasons, Westrum thinks Meldrum's footprint research, the alleged Sasquatch body imprint and other evidence will continue to be ignored.

"Scientists don't see this as a problem," he said. "As far as they're concerned, the evidence has never been recorded."

Said Meldrum: "But the bottom line is, these casts are taking up drawer space. These are points of datum. You can't simply sweep them under the rug. Well, you can, but you end up with a pretty lumpy rug."

In addition to Meldrum's footprint research, Henner Fahrenbach, a primate researcher for a private lab in Oregon, has identified a dozen hair samples, collected from four Western states, that he believes came from an unknown primate. Fahrenbach identified a fragment of similar hair that was plucked from the so-call Skookum Cast, a cast of the body imprint found in September.

Others have recorded incredibly loud, bellowing vocalizations from an undescribed animal, calls which when broadcast at night near reported Bigfoot sightings, have produced identical replies.

And then, there are sighting reports - literally: thousands of them - made by foresters, biologists and geologists, as well as campers, hikers and motorists. All tell of a remarkably large, hairy ape that covers rough ground with a strange, fluid motion not unlike a cross-country skier.

What's significant, said Meldrum, is that the evidence attributed to Sasquatch is consistent with what people report.

"The long and short of it is, there's a beautiful orchestration between what I'm seeing in my footprint analysis and all of the anecdotal reports of its gait: the forward lean, deeply bent knees," he said. "It's all a strategy for supporting a heavier, bulkier biped. And, it's a very elegant adaptation, I think, in the context of its very unbroken and rugged habitat.

Film most famous anecdotal evidence.

In 1967, Roger Patterson and Bob Gimlin, two Bigfoot enthusiasts, filmed what Meldrum and others believe is a female Sasquatch, complete with hairy breasts, striding away across a loamy streambed on Bluff Creek in Northern California. While some have since claimed that the film is a hoax, longtime Hollywood special-effects creator Bill Munns, said it would have been impossible in 1967 to fake a creature suit like the one depicted in the film.

"With today's technology, yes, you could fake a fur suit like that," said Munns, who did just that when he built a life-size model of the giant fossil ape, Gigantopithecus blacki - a possible evolutionary

link to Sasquatch - for University of Iowa anthropologist, Russell Ciochon, "But in the 1960s, short, dense stretch fur was nonexistent."

Meldrum thinks that, at a minimum, fossils of Gigantopithecus show that evolution could have produced a Sasquatch-size ape that lived in temperate forests. "It's tempting to draw the line between the two, but so little is known about either," Meldrum said.

If Giganto exists, then it has been a successful line. Fossils of the creature were discovered in cave sediments dated to a million years. The last fossils date to 300,000 to 400,000 years ago, a time when Homo erectus still populated Asia.

Ciochon, who has studied Gigantopithecus sites, rejects the link between Gigantopithecus and Sasquatch. He believes Gigantopithecus was a slow, sedentary knuckle walker like the gorilla, not a wide-ranging omnivore like the bear. Ciochon believes Giganto went extinct because of climate change, bamboo die-offs, and perhaps human hunting. Ciochon declined to be interviewed for this story.

For Meldrum, the Patterson-Gimlin film is doubly significant because several frames provide the only existing images of his study object, the creature's foot. A plaster cast of tracks left by the creature shows an apelike midfoot hinge that he says is a defining characteristic of the Sasquatch foot.

Lyle Laverty, until recently the top Forest Service official in the Rocky Mountain region, started his career as a timber manager in northern California during the late 1950s and 1960s. He investigated the Patterson-Gimlin sighting the day after the film was shot and photographed several footprints left by the animal. Laverty says the film site was so close to a logging road that he still worries the film might somehow have been faked. But Laverty refused to rule out the possibility that Bigfoot exists.

Starting in 1958, his logging crews reports finding hundreds of gigantic footprints around new logging sites. What ever left the prints was powerful enough to tumble logging equipment and toss 455-pound drums of gasoline, he says.

"You never want to count it out," said Laverty, who was recently tapped to head the Forest Service's national fire plan, with its $1.2 billion annual budget. "Some of these crews really felt something was up there. And anything that can pick up a 55-gallon drum of fuel is a big dude."

Meldrum's skepticism vanished in 1996, when he investigated a freshly laid line of alleged Bigfoot tracks in Washington's Blue

Mountains. After analyzing the tracks, he determined the animal that left them had proceeded out of a remote drainage along a soupy farm road, then turned and sprinted for the woods, as if fleeing something or someone, Meldrum said.

"In order for someone to have faked that, they would have had to walk out of the drainage carrying three or four different set s of feet, which they changed intermittently in mid-stride without any obvious breaks," he said. "It just becomes ludicrous to suggest that."

Last year, Meldrum received unexpected support from Chilcutt, the fingerprint and forensics expert who's also one of the world's few authorities on primate skin patterns, or dermatoglyphics. When Chilcutt saw Meldrum on television talking about apparent skin impressions on some plaster casts of alleged Sasquatch footprints, he offered to examine them, expecting to find Meldrum's claims were inaccurate.

Chilcutt developed an expertise in primate skin patterns as an offshoot of his ongoing study of the human fingerprint. His archive of more than 1,000 ape-skin impressions - prints he collected from tranquilized orangutans, chimpanzees and gorillas - is the largest such collection in the world.

When Chilcutt visited Meldrum's lab, it seemed his hunch would turn out to be accurate. He quickly determined that the ridges he found in the first track Meldrum gave him were from a human finger.

But when he examined the rest of Meldrum's collection, Chilcutt found two casts with coarse ridge patterns similar to each other but different from humans or know great apes. One cast of a footprint discovered in Washington's Blue Mountains in 1985 astonished him with the distinctive puckered scars of several healed wounds.

"When primate skin heals, the ridges curl inward toward the wound," he said. "Someone would have to know a real lot about biology and dermatoglyphics to know that. Anybody that smart wouldn't be messing with fakes."

While Chilcutt allows that any single track could be a hoax, he said the skin impressions he has identified in the Blue Mountains track were consistent with those found in a Bluff Creek track from 1967. "We're talking about 18 years and 700 or 800 miles apart," he said. After he spoke about his finding on National Public Radio, a sheriff's deputy sent in a cast of a track he'd found in Georgia in 1977. Same pattern.

In mid-November, Chilcutt examined skin impressions from alleged heel impressions from the body imprint discovered in

Washington. He said they match the other four examples he's identified.

Unlike other Bigfoot researchers who are often the object of professional scorn, no one has stepped forward to contradict Chilcutt.

"I'm so well entrenched, my reputation as a latent fingerprint examiner is secure," he said. "So, I don't have that problem. Knowing my background and expertise, they accept my findings."

Chilcutt says he's encouraged Meldrum to continue his research.

"I tell Jeff, 'There's no question this animal is out there, so don't give up," Chilcutt said.

"I want him to not give up on this. He's on to something."

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Dr. Jeffrey Meldrum Says Bigfoot Evidence Persistent

Since my firsthand examination of tracks in the Blues outside of Walla Walla, the body of evidence that has emanated from this region, bearing on the question of the existence and nature of a North American Ape, or Bigfoot, has been extensive and significant.

The physical geology of the region particularly lends itself to frequent track finds, and some of the most compelling examples of footprints have been discovered there. These tracks have been investigated by a number of professional scientists, including Grover Krantz, Henner Fahrenbach, John Mionczynski and others.

The body of evidence includes repeat appearances of identifiable individuals over successive years.

Examples of footprints that appear to preserve fine dermatoglyphic details have been regarded very seriously by a number of professional fingerprint examiners.

Hair samples have stood up to scrutiny, indicating a primate of indeterminate identity.

The persistence of this evidence, although remaining contested and controversial, warrants the long overdue consideration by the scientific community.

---- Dr. Jeffrey Meldrum

Dr. Ron Brown Says a Firm Bigfoot Connection Is Here

I have been working for years with wild game, both breeding and capturing. This always exciting and sometime dangerous avocation has taken me to many remote spots of our planet.

Dr. Ron Brown
(Photo courtesy of Ron Brown)

I recall isolated parts of East Africa where I live for lengths up to a year at a time, the interior of Australia, the green lush forest of New Zealand. How could I forget the jungles of Fiji and the expanse of Argentina and Brazil to name just a few. I've captured lions, hippos, antelope, dangerous snakes like mamba's and cobras etc.; yet none of this offers the thrill, excitement and sense of accomplishment as searching for Bigfoot. How could they?

When you consider that the single most important zoological find of history could lurk in the backyard of the most advanced country in the world, what an adventure! Yet it is this very sense of adventure that hinders the search. It has brought out the unscrupulous, wanting to make a fast buck, the paranormalists, attaching supernatural powers to the subject, and the critical, who, having never examined any evidence, know all! Stories from the 1800's about Bigfoot circulate even today. Newspapers, movies and TV ads make light of the subject commonly. Is it any wonder that money is rarely available and that scientists are few who take on the question, not being detracted?

All this aside, it doesn't in any way dismiss the evidence! Evidence that comes from almost every state in the U. S. and from people in all walks of like. I'm reminded of a call last year from the Clark County Sheriffs Office, Neillsville, Wisconsin, wherein their officer related an incident; or the foot print casts that came from law enforcement in Tennessee. Evidence that is compelling and beyond the

hoax and by its presence, demands further investigation. Is Walla Walla any different or more unlikely than Neillsville, Wisconsin? The truth is maybe yes, but yes in the affirmative in that the area outside Walla Walla seems to be better suited for both the animal and investigation.

When you look at the Walla Walla area, you will note the closeness of the Blue Mountains. Their connections to other wilderness areas, in some case with short breaks, to other even more vast wilderness areas. Why the doubts that Bigfoot could be there, when other areas near by, the same is not true. The better scientific question might be, why not? If one remembers, it was last year when reports came from Starbuck, not a place within a wooded area. This report is in no way unique. One thing for sure, if this animal does exist, it is very nomadic, and rivers, forest and even cultivated land are no obstacle. In point of fact, it may be the nearness of the cultivated areas with its crops, to the rugged wooded areas that makes the Blues the research site it is.

FIELDTRIPS:

Bigfoot and I go back to 1972 then a student at U. C. Berkeley, when I wrote an appraisal on the now famous "Patterson film" of October 1967. I was struck then and still am, on how real that film appears. I note that many so-called experts have come along to debunk the film, but also note that none of them were/are qualified to do so. They had what we all have, an opinion. It is interesting to note, that the strongest support comes from the most qualified people, people with expertise in film tampering, biomechanics, anatomy, and bipedialism. Of course, these are not often the interviews the media air. No concrete evidence of hearing of the Patterson film has ever surfaced, only stories and rumors and so far they should be given the same consideration the gibberish of dark beer halls receive.

In 1996, I was invited by Richard Greenwell to a meeting in Arizona along with Dr. Jeffrey Meldrum. There we set in motion plans that would incorporate the first field investigation manned by credentialed scientific persons. This field trip has it own story, see (Cryptozoology, vol. 13, 1997-1998, page 76). As the report of that trip reveals, I was not able to attend, as I was in Africa at the time. From this initial meeting, an informal partnership formed between Dr. Meldrum and myself, often accompanying one another in the field, and primarily in the Blue Mountains outside Walla Walla. Dr. Meldrum has

had earlier experiences here, and I will not attempt to describe or comment on that which he will do elsewhere in the book.

My first trip to the Blue Mountains was in 1998. I can still remember driving there and wondering where are the trees and the forest. All I saw was wheat and onion fields and they were rather bleak as it was the fall. Looking back now, it is not hard to see how people would doubt that Bigfoot occupies the area But then..... we starting to drive towards the mountains, up gravel roads and within what seems only minutes, there we were in one of the most unusual wilderness areas I've ever been in. Unusual, in that there is this zone of abrupt debarkation from farm to wilderness, with little or nothing in between. Once in the wilderness, it isn't much different in appearance than other wilderness areas. It has its trees, hills, mountains, spectacular vistas and resident game populations. But there was a feeling. It was a feeling I probably brought with me, anticipating the search, but none the less a feeling.

Talking about feelings isn't very scientific, but to deny it, denies my humanness. I was ready for the work, hoping that something would happen, be seen, anything. We camped just outside the Mill Creek water shed and had a lovely long night in heavy rains.

We found no items of note, but I did get a better sense of the area. We walked the ridges and valleys and found cougar (F. concolor) tracks, and most of the day, in some specific places, noticed a strange odor in the air. What made that unusual to me was that most of the day it continued to rain, and I was hard pressed to understand an odor lingering in the air during long, heavy, rainy periods. This odor was like a heavy, sweaty musk type, and with all sincerity, reminded me of the odor of gorillas.

The olfactory sense has a strong connection to our memory. It is common place for the odor of food to take one back to a past experience, the scent of cologne to remind us of a past love, etc. Well, this smell made my mind go immediately to the night gorilla enclosure at the Cincinnati zoo. My imagination, well possibly, but Dr. Meldrum smelled it as I did. Due to heavy rain, few tracks of any other animals were noted. It was my introduction!

What struck me the most about the Blues was their game density. I have not been there when I didn't see something, be it elk, deer, turkeys, grouse, and spoor from some other animals including Bigfoot. With the closeness of agriculture to the wilderness areas, feed for any number of animals is easily supplemented with that which is not

normally found in wilderness areas. This in itself might help a resident population of Bigfoot survive. I recall one story told to me by the witness, wherein, when backpacking deep in the Umatilla National Forest, found a pile of broccoli stalks many miles from any known field for such. One has to ask, what animal is there that eats broccoli, would, and could carry it that far? I know of no herbivore that could other than a primate explanation.

On subsequent trips, tracks of Bigfoot were found. In one place, Dr. Meldrum and I measured the stride, straddle and degree of foot orientation to midline of the track way. I'm not aware of these types of measurement being taken before. The composite picture that emerged, coupled with other very interesting forensic evidence, leads me to believe that the tracks that I have seen are not the result of a hoax. Hare there been hoaxes? Sure there have, but that in itself cannot explain the greater bulk of the stories and evidence that emerge from the area.

Forensic Evidence

Myths don't leave behind evidence. The Blues have provided not only the well known tracks but video images, still photos, hand prints, buttock impression, knee impressions, foot prints with dermal ridge patterns that are not human, hair samples that don't match any known animal, territorial markers called "twist offs" and even scat. Can all this be explained as hoaxing? After careful scientific scrutiny the answer is a resounding NO! Dr. John Binderagel, wildlife biologist from Canada, is of the opinion, that there is sufficient evidence of Bigfoot's existence, that the question of it, is already answered.

Without examination of the evidence, a very simple question arises. If all the evidence and stories are faked, what is/are the motivation/s.

If we look at the physical evidence, i.e. tracks, hand prints etc., I can't help but wonder why people don't recite that it would take considerable time, energy and money to try to fake such, if it is in fact possible to fake and then have a foreknowledge of where people would travel to, in fact, find them after their planting.

I'm not considering here some general, obscure cast impression that appears to be a footprint, but detailed tracks with dermal ridge patterns, scars and details of foot anatomy that would hold up under close scrutiny of credentialed scientists. Then asking, for what, the thrill of just doing it? It doesn't seem to make sense, other than what is

seen, examined and tested is in fact what it is....real.

Hairs:

The hairs that have been tested to date are about 12 samples in number. They have been provided by various people over time from different places. The Blues have been a site of hair collection as well as other places in Washington State, Oregon and California. Those hairs that can not be attributed to any known animals, all have the same series of features that show it to be unique. DNA testing is underway.

Dermal ridge patterns in casts:

Some early reports of dermal ridge patterns (that which leave what is called "Finger Prints") found in cast and reported to be that of the animal, were probably latent transfer from the making of the cast. However, all dermal ridge patterns are not so easily explained away. One expert latent finger print examiner, Jimmy Chilcutt, has a repertoire of over a thousand primate foot and hand prints studied and examined. Working for a police forensic lab, it's his job to identify the unique features in dermal ridge patterns. His examination of prints taken from the Blues near Blue Creek Road in 1967 and cast of tracks taken near the Walla Walla River table in 1984 are in his mind, "made by a large non-human primate" and beyond faking. Chilcutt is one who is qualified to say so. His ability to identify dermal ridge patterns is replete within the halls of law enforcement and the FBI. He is no novice. Further, his experience with apes dermal ridge patterns, make him very capable of comparing apes and humans to the purported Bigfoot tracks and casts. His findings have been published in a paper, "Dermal Ridge Examination Report, 05-01-1999."

Foot Prints / Castings

Dr. Meldrum, as I stated earlier, has made inroads into the question of Bigfoot through his study of the foot prints and the resulting foot anatomy constructed from them. He is quite confident that this animal has a heretofore unknown unique mid-foot flexion point, thus allowing the foot to bend almost at the ankle when walking. He has pointed out to me, ratios in the hand and foot measurement, that only a handful of scientists are aware of, and these ratios keep coming up in casts taken from all over the Pacific Northwest, even the casts

made from foot prints found in the Blues. These features alone, make it very hard to believe that tracks with this feature are fakeable, and becomes a feature that helps in determining the genuine. There are other anatomical details identified, but I will leave their discussion to others more qualified. I note, that the eventual publishing of this information risks that pranksters will also try to duplicate them, but in many respects, I'm confident that it will be beyond their ability.

What Sightings have in common

Whenever I speak on Bigfoot, it is common place to be ask questions, and a few of these always arise. Why don't more people see them if they are real? How come a body isn't found?
I'm a hunter, and I'm always in the woods and I don't see them, why is this, etc. etc. etc.

The number of sighting has always been of interest to me. Those who ask of this, are never aware of the number that are reported each year. Credible people, from all walks of life are not quick to want to report seeing a bipedal ape, yet the experience often changes them for life.
They don't want the ridicule that come with making such reports. As time passes, and more men of science start studying and reporting on this subject, I believe that you will see more folks coming forward with their sightings. Currently, I have received reports from the most unlikely of people, if this is all a sham, like police officers, game wardens and doctors. Their reports are of no more consequences than from other folks, with the exception that they sure don't need the added attention that such report generate, possibly affecting the jobs. I know of one law enforcement officer who eventually lost his job from making a report, that according to him was the result of only that. When one looks at the number of credible sightings reports and all are not deemed credible, you will note that the number of sightings that occur within daylight hours as opposed to night are equal. This surprising observation clearly tells us know that the animal in question is nocturnal. You see, people are not often found in the woods at night. So for the two numbers to be equal, the night sightings must show a greater activity level, as we the observers are less active.

The composite picture that has emerged from the sightings is that of a large, hair-covered ape that walks upright. It's adult size is calculated to be that of a 600 to 900 pounds with a height up to around eight feet. It is a shy, timid, retreating animal, powerfully built and at

times seems to demonstrate added curiosity in the activity of men.

It is further interesting to note, that this composite picture emerged at a time in our history when our understanding of ape biology, as portrayed in ligature and the media, was that of a brutish blood thirsty beast, and contrary to this influence, Bigfoot was the opposite. We now know, that this exactly as it should be. North American Bigfoot reports predicted ape behavior before Jane Goodall and Diana Fossey were in the jungles for the first time.

To the hunter and hikers, I must point out that they look for game that has spines (backbones) that are horizontal to the ground. They don't look or think vertical when hunting or observing, and the movement that is generated from both does not alert us in the same way. As a result, a Bigfoot when standing still, can easily disappear among the various colored tree trunks and shadows. It is this standing still in the upright position, some time for extended periods, that is so unlike other North American animals that fools the visitor in the wilderness.

It therefore seems that the Blues and Bigfoot are connected. Indian folk lore has him there, and current data collection verifies that some unknown animal is there. it is this writer's opinion, that time will only bolster this assertion.

— Dr. Ron Brown

Blue Mountains a Prime Research Area: Krantz

"I agree with you that the Blue Mountains of Washington-Oregon is one of the prime areas of Bigfoot research today." --- Grover Krantz, retired anthropologist, Washington State University, now residing in Port Angeles.

Krantz was never known for using more words than absolutely necessary. That fact of his life is evident in his response above to a recent question about the importance of the Blue Mountains for Bigfoot research. This statement and some others he made in his excellent book, 'Big Foot-Prints' A Scientific Inquiry into the Reality of Sasquatch, are highly worthy of presenting as we close this section of our book.

This is the very knotty matter of coming up with proof that such a creature as Bigfoot/Sasquatch actually exists. No simple matter and a major pothole in the road we all plod, as we seek validity to the subject of our search. The Krantz book is a major tome on my personal Bigfoot library. I heartily recommend it be the same in the libraries of serious Bigfoot researchers.

In his book, Krantz tells us how science treats new species:

Science requires solid evidence of a new species, footprints and sightings by local people are never enough. A type specimen must be obtained, which is then described in a scientific journal and continues to be available for other experts to examine. For modern mammals this normally consists of a skin and skull that show distinction from all similar specimens. For fossils it consists of some skeletal material that is clearly distinct from what appear to be its closest relatives. Nothing of the kind has been recovered from the Sasquatch; therefore, it does not exist in the eyes of science.

"Actually, the rules of evidence vary somewhat, depending on the nature of the animal whose existence is proposed. The more unusual and or unexpected it is, the more proof is required to establish its existence. A new subspecies of chipmunk or sparrow might be provisionally accepted on the basis of clear observations by one or two competent biologists. For a higher taxonomic level, that

of a new species, a specimen is normally required no matter who saw it.

"Even a good specimen is not always sufficient. The first skin of a colobus monkey to reach Europe was called a fake: clearly, in the opinion of experts, the many long, white hairs had been artificially inserted into a solid coat of shorter black hairs. The first skin of a platypus was greeted with even more derision: the bill and tail were obviously attached to some mammal's skin. Yet, these soon proved to be perfectly real animals, just as their skins had first indicated.

Clearly, the sasquatch does not constitute a new order of mammals like the elephant. Almost certainly it is not even a distinct family like the giraffe. Its physical distinctions from known primates would most likely rate a new genus, nothing higher. And that genus is quite possibly one that is already known in the fossil record: it might even be a known fossil species. Things could have been worse.

"All government agencies take the same skeptical view as does the Scientific Establishment. There are no laws regulating or prohibiting the hunting of sasquatch any more than there are for hunting unicorns, gremlins or trolls. Sasquatches have no more civil rights than angels, fairies or leprechauns."

That's the end of the Krantz quote, leaving us with the question:

So, to date there just isn't such a thing as Bigfoot?

That flies in the face of the fact that Paul Freeman, who came upon a Bigfoot at close range in 1982, continues to swear: "I know what I saw."

And people like the late Bob Titmus, who saw three Bigfoots at different times.

Or, John Green, who has a collection of more than 2,000 plaster casts of big foot prints.

Or, the Dayton logging truck driver who stopped his truck to eyeball at very close range and for several minutes, a towering Bigfoot, who returned his inquisitive stare.

Or, the St. John, Wash., horseback rider, Sheryl Jenkins, who can tell you about having seen more than one Bigfoot (on different occasions) as she rode the trail on the Mill Creek Watershed boundary.

Or, the many others who have given us their Bigfoot accounts found in this book.

But, we just ain't got the proof that's needed, pardners!

But, there will be some day!

Just keep plodding down that road.

Fahrenbach Cites Region as Unique for Bigfoot Seeking

Why he feels the Blue Mountains region is prime research area for Bigfoot, was answered by W. Henner Fahrenbach, biologist for a primate research center in Portland, Oregon, but he has more data to share that should intrigue many who follow this pursuit.

Fahrenbach is another of the grouping of scientists who have not only visited this area, he has taken a stand in favor of there being such a creature in our forests.

When asked to cite his beliefs about the Blue Mountains and its Bigfoot inhabitants, Fahrenbach also came to the defense of Paul Freeman and his contributions to the research since 1982. Here is the letter from Fahrenbach about the Blues and Freeman:

Dear Vance,

First of all, I think that the topography of the Blues is singularly suited to making long-distance observations. The combination of groves of trees, relatively open forest at that, and common wide open meadows provides the clear views that elsewhere in the Northwest is only afforded by water courses.

Also the steep terrain favors views from ridge to ridge, i.e., observations with binoculars without being obtrusive. The proximity of the watershed and a wilderness area gives the Bigfoot a welcome retreat from virtually all disturbance.

I have now in my possession about 15 hair samples, all morphologically congruous except for color and length. They were collected by a variety of people in four states over years, none of them knowing what the "real" sasquatch hair looks like. It is next to impossible to find this kind of a collection of human hair, given that not one of these samples has a medulla, a common component of human hair. Out of these collections, five came from Paul Freeman.

The accusation that he practiced "scientific sabotage" by submitting Dynel as possible sasquatch hair is maliciousness, in that neither he nor a renowned cosmetic laboratory could tell that it was NOT hair. Furthermore, I got a Dynel sample from the Oregon Coast Range from a wildlife biologist/bigfoot researcher of peerless reputation, which indicates that Dynel is an environmental contaminant from discarded overstuffed furniture, for which it was produced in immense industrial quantities.

Some of the castings collected by Paul contain anatomical details that only an anatomist can appreciate after study, but not one that a layman would conjure up and convincingly introduce into fabrications. Paul may slide a bit in his recounting of specific events but that happens to everybody and that constitutes no grounds for according him the universal disdain he has been receiving. Frequency of sightings simply indicates that you are hanging out in the right area, which he did for years.

I hope this little bit helps you along.

My best, Henner.

Section Four

Some Miscellaneous Bigfoot Commentary

To Report or Not Report Your Bigfoot Sighting?

Sheryl Jenkins of St. John, WA became a Bigfoot believer real fast when she came upon a Bigfoot sitting beside the trail she was riding with her horse. She was firmly convinced a time later when she saw two at the same time and in nearly the same place as the first incident on the boundary trail for the Mill Creek Watershed.

It took her husband, Mike, a bit longer to acknowledge such a creature existed, but he came around. Sheryl's encounters are reported in "Bigfoot of the Blues."

Here's how Sheryl handles the inquiries she continues to receive about her sightings of the 'Walla Walla Bigfoots' and her beliefs in sharing what she has witnessed.

For myself, for the record or my two cents worth, I have not held back on my sightings and though I have been contacted by several in the 'unique' category, I would recommend that if you see a Sasquatch and have a sighting don't be scared to share it. I have never regretted it.

My husband and I spent a lot of time discussing (before we had a sighting) if we would tell people. We talked of this because we had been told that we were in the area to see one, but we weren't ready then to decide if they existed or not. For us the decision to talk about it or not was taken out of our hands by Dr. Grover Krantz. He called the day after for an interview which I granted, but I recommend anyone to talk about it. I also recommend you write down your sighting experience in detail as close to what occurred as possible and keep a copy handy and give out copies when asked about the experience.

"Our memories change, if you write it down the events and little things you noticed or didn't notice will be recorded. Although poorly written at the time, I still hand out my original observations and if people press me for my sightings details, I give them a copy. I will discuss it now, but it is best to write up the sighting as it happened at the time and keep a copy with the date on it."

Mike's 'conversion' came about two years after Sheryl's

sightings, during elk hunting season. He heard what he felt had to be a Bigfoot, Sheryl recounted recently.

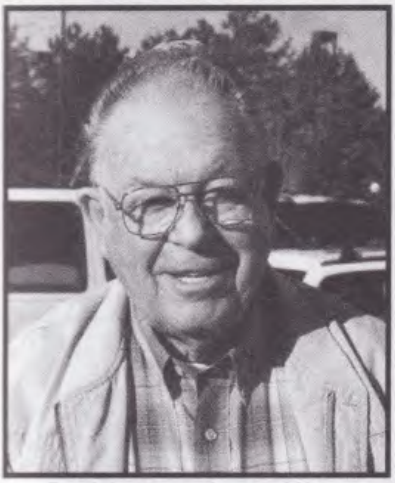
"The hair on his neck raised," she recalled, "and a cousin hunting with him a half mile away decided he wanted to leave the area. Mike figured the animal was about two ridges away but the sound was different from anything he had heard before or since and it continued for some time. When Mike came back to our hunting cabin, the first thing he said was 'You won't believe what I heard!' I looked at the fear and shock in his eyes and said 'Sasquatch.' He said: 'How did you know?' He firmly believed in Bigfoot after that."

How Do You Go From Skeptic To Being A Believer in Bigfoot?

If ever there was a guy who filled the bill of being a major skeptic of Bigfoot it was Bill Laughery.

'Was' is correct, however.

Today, Laughery is one of the biggest backers in Bigfoot's existence in the Blue Mountains and one of its most persistent trackers.



Bill Laughery

Laughery was born and raised in Dayton and Columbia County of SE Washington and spent a lot of time in the woods, as a boy and later as a game warden for the Washington Department of Game. Later, when he was to follow other professions and spend most of his life in residence in the Tri-Cities, he never was away from the Blue Mountains around Dayton for very long. In the mountains he has always enjoyed hunting and fishing. And, just being out in the woods was a boyhood delight. Here he'd often spend hours at a time, just sitting still and observing wildlife as it passed.

Laughery recalls his reaction when he read the first accounts of Paul Freeman's sighting of a Bigfoot near Walla Walla in 1982.

"I thought and said then that the story was a lot of bunk," he says. "I spent a lot of years in the mountains and I'm a good tracker, too. I never saw any tracks (of a Bigfoot) and never saw a Bigfoot, either. Further, I said then that until I see one or see a track of one, I'm not going to believe it either."

Becoming a believer, however, was to come to this scoffer.

Shortly after the Freeman sighting was reported and the din had died a bit, Laughery recalls he paid a visit to his sister, Nellie O'Connor. Nellie was not a Bigfoot scoffer and instead, collected stories and material about them when she could. On a visit to her home

she asked Bill if he believed in Bigfoot.

"Heck, no," he readily responded.

"I want to show you something," she said and then produced three fat scrapbooks of news stories and other material she had collected about Bigfoot.

What he gleaned from the perusal of the scrapbooks did not make of him a believer then, but an item he noticed in the books was the thread to believing. What he found was a photo of the late Wes Sumerlin, the acknowledged guru of Bigfoots in the Walla Walla area.

"I hadn't seen Wes for several years," Laughery recalls "So I went over to visit him and he brought out his own scrapbooks of pictures and news stories."

Laughery admits this study of the Sumerlin material, kind of had him halfway convinced there was such a thing as Bigfoot

"But, I still held out and told him the next time he had a sighting of tracks to phone me."

One morning Wes called Laughery and said. "Get on up here, we've got tracks, all kinds of them."

That was in 1992 and the tracks were all around the berry patches and walnut trees near the old Coyote School above Mill Creek, seven or eight miles east of Walla Walla.

This was the first big sighting of Bigfoot tracks or signs for Laughery and he was 'pretty well convinced,' although there was more to come.

Laughery and Sumerlin and Freeman were to team up in sightings of three Bigfoots over the years since then, completely dropping Laughery out of the ranks of the skeptic and scoffer of tales about Bigfoot. His sightings of a Bigfoot (all different creatures) came on April 21, 1994, Aug. 5, 1995 and on June 10, 1997. In the 1994 incident, Laughery and Freeman were investigating two sets of tracks found near a logging landing. Here a locked chain was stretched between two big pipes buried in concrete to form a gate.

"One of the Bigfoots (there were 15-inch and 12-inch tracks found at the scene) had just jerked one of those pipes out of the ground and tossed it aside. Nearby, the owner's snowmobile had been picked up and flung around by the Bigfoots."

To reach this point the two had hiked in a mile or more from their pickup truck, so Laughery volunteered to walk back and bring it up as Freeman's foot, injured earlier, was giving him a lot of pain. As he reached the truck, Laughery says "something" told him to look

across the canyon and there, standing in a patch of snow below a small pine tree was a Bigfoot!

"I grabbed for my binoculars," he says, "but by the time I got them to my eyes, the thing had disappeared."

Driving back to Freeman, Laughery told him: "I saw something over on that hillside."

To which, Freeman responded: "So did I."

"Where did you see it," Laughery asked.

Freeman said: "See that little pine tree across the canyon with a patch of snow under it? It was standing right there on the upper side."

Laughery speaks of the elusiveness of the Bigfoot and how this is no doubt a factor in its having eluded mankind all these years.

"For one thing, when it's behind a tree and remains motionless, it's almost impossible to see one. As long as they remain motionless, they likely aren't going to be seen. And, I have never seen any animal in the woods that can move as quickly as one of these things, either. A Bigfoot could just squat down when he senses a man coming and would never be seen. I believe some tracking experts would miss one, thinking it was a stump."

When asked what he thought would be the response to someone who scoffs at a Bigfoot story, Laughery recounted the experience of a fellow Game Department employee, Morris Owens of Dayton, now retired.

When I told him about seeing a Bigfoot, Morris just scoffed and said "there's no such thing, you're just seeing bears."

Laughery says Owens' turnaround came later one day when Owens made a trip to the Squaw Camp area on the Skyline Drive.

He told me he got out there aways from the camp site and glancing up saw what he thought was a bear, so he gets out his binoculars and as he scoped the terrain, the 'bear' stood up and the walked off on two legs.

"A few days later, I was in a restaurant eating, when Morris comes in, taps me on the shoulder and said:" 'You know I was thinking of you the other day, I wish you'd have been along.'

"Why?"

"Then, he told me what he'd seen near Squaw Camp and of how the 'bear' had walked off on two legs."

I said: 'See?'

"And, Morris just replied," 'Yes, I believe you now.'

Bears, of course, might occasionally stand erect on hind legs to

get a better view but do not walk off erect, like a human being.

Or, a Bigfoot.

"We spent a little time discussing this attitude of a lot of people, people who have been in the woods much of their lives, with the Forest Service, game departments and driving logging trucks out of the high mountains and who deny so vehemently that, "such a thing doesn't exist."

Laughery's thought was this:

"There's probably no answer, except for them to see one, but I would venture to say that people who say they've been in the mountains all their life and never saw a Bigfoot - well, I would venture to say Bigfoots have seen him several times."

Another subject of interest concerning the Bigfoot around here is the population. At first, Laughery was willing to consider that we have 'seven or eight of them' but he later felt that number was too small.

"We could be looking at 15 or 20 and even more right here," he says. "And, they have been reported since Lief Ericson came to the eastern shores of America 700 years ago. Now we have them reported in all but two of the states and numbers seem to be growing."

Bill Laughery changed from a scoffer and nonbeliever to one of the firmest believers in Bigfoot - right here in the Blue Mountains Country.

Fahrenbach: "Bigfoot Hair ... That's My Gut Feeling"

(AUG. 22, 1996) -- A year ago, Bigfoot hair samples, sent off to Eastern labs for DNA testing, created a stir in this continuing saga. The media became especially titillated over the possibilities, with several locally-shot TV documentaries being spawned in the past 12 months.

Recently on what he termed "the anniversary trip," Henner Fahrenbach, a research biologist at a Portland research institute, came a-calling in the land of the "Walla Walla Bigfoot."

It was Fahrenbach, who in August 1995, had received from Bigfoot tracker, Wes Sumerlin, hair samples which Fahrenbach dispatched to the labs at Ohio State University. Sumerlin had found the hair on bushes where he and Bill Laughery and Paul Freeman had encountered a Bigfoot a year ago.

A man truly dedicated to an overriding hobby is Fahrenbach. His seeking for the truth in the Bigfoot matter has no connection with his employer, he emphasized to me on his visit here earlier this month.

I found Fahrenbach a very straight-forward man, one who cuts through the murk or haze of wordiness which can get into Bigfoot discussions. So, it was with eagerness that I met him when he arrived at the Sumerlin home and was able to ask him questions which have puzzled Bigfoot enthusiasts and the media alike.

After observing it had been a year since the hair had gone to the laboratories for DNA testing, I asked him if this was "normal" to take so long for some sort of report to be made of testing.

Fahrenbach said the lab work to date had probably taken longer than usual because the lab routines necessary here were not routine and there was a lack of finances.

"They haven't given up," he said, "but the problem is their limited resources. What I'm trying to do (on his Walla Walla and Blue Mountains visit) is to gather up as much of the short Bigfoot hair as I can... most of the short hair has hair bulbs ... then they (the labs) will try to run an analysis purely on the hair bulbs (DNA will be a bit clearer in the bulbs)."

Can anything at all definite be said of the lab work so far?

"It is not ape hair and it is not human hair is all they can say at present," Fahrenbach said.

Does this statement mean we are a step closer to calling these samples Bigfoot hair?

"Well, it certainly gets you a closer, because it does look like human hair... and that's the crucial difference," Fahrenbach said. "Also, of course, it's not like any of the other hairs (found in the woods) ... deer, elk, bears, squirrels, etc."

Does this scientist with the burning desire to unravel the Bigfoot enigma have a gut feeling as to what the hair is? Fahrenbach left no doubt as he replied.

"I think it's Sasquatch hair ... that is my gut feeling."

Does he have a prime reason for taking this stand, a position which sets him apart in a small circle of his peers.

Fahrenbach (with the hair samples sent him by Sumerlin) says he now has three similarities on which to base his conclusions. "I have had two other cases (like the Walla Walla Bigfoot sighting and hairs from the site). I have hair sent me that was gathered out of a Sasquatch bedding site near Crescent City, Calif., that looks identical to this (Walla Walla) hair.

"I have another case, a description of hair that was lifted out of a Bigfoot track by a criminal investigator of the Grays Harbor, Washington, police department. This hair was sent to a Utah laboratory and I read the description of it and it matches this hair also."

What Fahrenbach has accumulated on this issue is three samples of Bigfoot hair from circumstances where, "I know the collection is a fairly good one... rather than something picked off a random barbed wire fence."

Fahrenbach's three-day Walla Walla visit was not limited to a few hours of conversation at the Sumerlin home ... he spent two days in the nearby Blue Mountains, scanning sites of Bigfoot encounters and tracks. On one day he was in the Biscuit Ridge area with Sumerlin and Bill Laughery, where the Bigfoot had been seen a year ago. The next day he was in the Yellowjacket and Deduct Spring areas with Laughery and Paul Freeman,

Fahrenbach also spent time at the Freeman home where he inspected Bigfoot material collected for the past decade here by Freeman, the ex-Forest Service patrolman who kicked up all this Bigfoot fuss when he ran into one in 1982. Among samples of "hair" collected by Fahrenbach on his Walla Walla trip were two batches

from my own Bigfoot relic collection, given me by Freeman. One was from Squaw Spring in 1988 and the other from Mill Creek in 1992.

Fahrenbach determined each of my samples was plant life which "does a good job at simulating hair." "Apparently these are the same fibers that were originally submitted to some lab that concluded that they were Dacron, upon which much of the patently ridiculous animosity toward Paul (Freeman) stems. "These fibers from Paul are decidedly not man-made...."

These are words which might (just might) quell some of the anti-Freeman feeling in the Bigfoot fraternity, where murmurs of hoaxing have been heard, most stemming from this "Dacron" finding by a lab.

On hearing of Bigfoot tracks and other material, it was revealing to read what one of the most astute Bigfoot veterans, John Green, has to say on this issue. His full remarks, in a rebuttal to Mark Chorvinsky in Fate Magazine, appeared in the August issue of Bigfoot Co-op. Green said this: "The true situation with regard to Bigfoot on the West Coast is that there have certainly been hoaxes exposed, some of them elaborate and clever; there have undoubtedly been other hoaxes that may or may not be discovered, and there will undoubtedly be more in the future.

"There are, however, at least a couple of thousand reports that would have to be explained away before the reality of Bigfoot could be conclusively dismissed, because if even one report is accurate, the animal is there."

Does a Bigfoot Look You Right in the Eye?

(Feb. 15, 1996) ... In the most recent issue of his Bigfoot newsletter, Don Keating calls attention to an alleged peculiarity of the creature. I say "alleged" because the oddity of the animal is one picked out by Peter Byrne, premier Bigfoot searcher.

Keating's newsletter, "The Monthly Bigfoot Report," is out of his organization, the Eastern Ohio Bigfoot Investigation Center, Newcomerstown, OH.

Keating carries an item about odd conduct noted by the Bigfoots. It caught my eye and something didn't seem to "mesh," so I turned to some of my own observations about the critter.

Here's the Keating commentary by Byrne:

"Peter Byrne of the Bigfoot Research Project, reports the following:

"A number of new sightings have come in ... five recently ... all very credible and all confirming the importance of continued research into the phenomenon. And the similitudes that we see in the sighting encounters, both in physical description and in behavior, continue.

Several of the recent reports illustrate the odd conduct of the creatures seem to have of not looking directly at the human eye witness, even when an approaching motor vehicle is involved. This is even, for those who have noticed it, a significant item in the 1967 (Roger Patterson) film footage, occurring right at the beginning of the footage when the creature being filmed stops and looks straight ahead for a few seconds ... and not at the cameraman ... before continuing. The reason for this? We can only speculate. But it is appropriate, I feel, to view this conduct as part of the on going mystery of the phenomenon that enhances the challenges that face us in a discovery."

I have some thoughts about the above. If Byrne is making the point that Bigfoots always avoid looking directly at the human viewer, I'd like to offer some differing observations.

Starting with the Roger Patterson filming, if memory serves me right, the Bigfoot in this case went on and out of sight as Patterson ran out of him in his camera. Then, later investigation showed evidence the

creature had walked to a higher point, then sat down to observe Patterson and his partner, Bob Gimlin.

Then, as to Byrne's comments that the Bigfoot "looks straight ahead for a few seconds and not the cameraman, before continuing," consider a possibility. The Bigfoot at that point possibly was simply distracted by movements of Gimlin and his horse and glanced that way before continuing to stride on.

This matter of the Bigfoot not looking directly at the human viewer reminds of the Paul Freeman incident in 1982. Freeman reported in a press interview after the sighting that the Bigfoot turned and strode away, turning to glance back at Freeman from time to time.

In my book, "Bigfoot of the Blues," I report the multiple Bigfoot sightings by Sheryl Jenkins of St. John, WA. The sightings were all on the boundary, of the Mill Creek Watershed in the late 1980s. From what she told me, I readily gathered that one or more of the four she saw (on three occasions) had looked at her and for more than a passing glance. Then, turning to the last page of the current Keating newsletter, I find a reproduction of the Cliff Crook photo of a Bigfoot, said to have been taken last year near Mount Rainier. In that case, the Bigfoot is looking up from taking a drink and staring directly at the photographer! Then, for a final look backward in the old memory banks, there is a story or two where human and Bigfoot are in a face-to-face situation. Standing only a few feet apart, there is direct eyeball contact!

All these incidents I've cited represent only mere handful of the total number of Bigfoot sightings, up close and at a distance, so Byrne might have something. For some of the sightings. I doubt if it's something ALL Bigfoots do, however.

We Ramble A Bit About Bigfoot Encounters and Commentaries

(**Sept. 1, 1997**) -- While reports of Bigfoot activity in the Blue Mountains this past summer have been sparse, there have been a few, just to keep the record up to date.

I was reminded of this by a re-reading of one of the 'primers' for those who would become more knowledgeable of this anomaly of our times. (Actually, it is a strangeness of past times as all kinds of incidents have been noted for centuries in the Northwest, just for openers). The primer is 'Bigfoot: On the Track of the Sasquatch,' by John Green, who is regarded as Numero Uno of Bigfoot investigators by many.

First off for the local scene, there were several Bigfoot tracks found in the Blues this spring and summer and an up-closer-than-you'd-ever-want-to-be encounter with one. I can't reveal the precise location because the sighter-reporter asks for complete anonymity. Here's the report I got:

This man owns a cabin in the mountains in a rather isolated area, "that's where you build cabins isn't it?," and had just cleaned up the dirty dishes one day. Taking the pan of dirty dishwater, the man strode to the cabin door, flung it open and tossed out the water.

Smack into the face of a Bigfoot standing just outside the door! Well, two surprised creatures whirled and went opposite directions, I'm told the BF went back into the brush from whence it had come and the man dashed back into the cabin, slamming the door shut on the run!

My informant added that the cabin has not been visited since and furthermore is on the market for quick sale, the quicker the better!

Reading a story the other day on the Internet I was stricken with desire for rebuttal so have done so in a story of my own. The story I picked up referred to the belief 'by many' that the movie footage shot with 16-mm camera in 1967 by Roger Patterson was a hoax of the Hollywood makeup artists. "It's just a man in a fur suit," they scoffed.

My lengthy refutation cited comments by John Green in his fine book, remarks based on his highly detailed study of the Patterson film and on-site inspection. Green's comments are somewhat lengthy so I'll shorten it a bit. He says:

"Persons seeing the film, even trained observers, with

qualifications in zoology, almost get the impression that the creature walks just like a man and has a build that would not be abnormal for a man. Frame by frame study of the movie and measurements of the proportions of the figure contradict both these impressions. The stride is actually much smoother than a normal man's because the knee is bent as the weight comes on it. A walking man bobs up and down as his body goes over the top of his straightened leg. The Sasquatch in the film (a female) moves in a flowing fashion, with her leg being bent at all times. It is much straighter when she is reaching out in full stride than when it is bearing her full weight."

Green further notes that measurements of the creature filmed by Patterson, compared with those of a man just do not fit and "add to the problems for those who would like to dismiss the film as a hoax."

Nowadays, there is much hullabaloo about testing some hairs suspected to have come from a Bigfoot in the Blues a couple years ago. Well, Green, writing in his book back in 1968, has some comments about hair-testing which are just as pertinent today.

"Hairs have been collected in places where Sasquatches were reported, and have been examined by competent experts, but they can only be compared with hairs of known origin. Some of the hairs collected were found not to match those of any known North American mammal and it was stated that they could be from an unknown primate. Obviously, when no collection contains known Sasquatch hairs there is no way to prove that hair you find comes from a Sasquatch."

And, right there, Green touches upon a subject that, when he publicly voiced it, got WSU anthropologist Grover Krantz in hot water. Green in his book opines that the Sasquatch puzzle may never be solved until one is slain. As he closes his book, Green observes:

"I have thought for a long time that the most likely way for the Sasquatch question to be settled is for some deer hunter to down one."

However, gunning down a Bigfoot very possibly won't be all that simple. There are numerous cases on record of high-powered hunting rifles being used to no avail as well as 12-guage shotguns up real close. Green's book cites one such incident, which occurred near Richland, Wash., in 1967. Two youths had stumbled across a Bigfoot in that area and came back armed with a 12-guage shotgun hoping to get another glimpse of the creature. The taped interview with the boys had these words:

"I reached down and pulled up a (tree) branch and D---- was standing on my right, and we saw it. It was about 8 or 10 feet away

from us, I don't know how far it was, but it wasn't very far. It was in a crouching position. It was downhill from us, and I'd say it was at least 9 feet tall when it was standing up, when it was crouched it was probably 7 feet tall, or something like that you know."

"So D--- just let him have it twice with the 12-guage from the hip, just shot him twice. That knocked it down, it rolled over twice and got up and went right through a four-strand fence and snapped three poles off, big wooden poles, snapped them off flush with the ground. So, D--- and I figured, well, we shot it, it was just gonna roll, and when it stopped rolling it'll be there dead, you know, so as soon as he started rolling we started down the bank after him. Then when he got up and ran, he ran away from us, so we decided well, he's not as hurt as we thought he was, and we only had one more shot, so we started back up where everybody else was."

In the Blue Mountains, there is more than one report of hunters having shot and wounded a Bigfoot, only to have it continue on over the next ridge and be gone.

This apparent ability of the Bigfoot to take a 30-caliber slug and keep on going 'and going' is one of the seven established facts about the Bigfoot as compiled by Green.

The facts:

1. They are not human, their size goes beyond that of humans and they show no signs of human mentality.

2. They are completely omnivorous, making use of vegetable material that man cannot.

3. They can see in the dark.

4. They are strong swimmers and do just as well under water.

5. They make a variety of sounds, apparently being able to imitate most birds and animals of their surroundings.

6. They are very hard to kill.

7. They are deliberately avoiding contact with humans and are very successful in doing so.

And now, just in case you buy a neat little cabin tucked away in the Blues in some secluded nook, be careful and watch where you throw your dish water out the back door!

Did Bigfoot Once Reside On the Columbia River?

Did Bigfoot once roam the mid-Columbia River area in Oregon? Or, was it just an extra large ... really BIG ... human being?

These are questions which likely have no answer but I was reminded of the possibilities the other day when I ran across an old Walla Walla U-B column of mine from 1966. The column was based upon the moves necessary for many Boardman residents with the coming of the backwaters from the John Day Dam on the Columbia River. Boardman is some 80 miles west of Walla Walla.

While most such people opted to move to higher ground in the vicinity, one decided on a move clear across the country ... to Florida!

That resident was Grattan L. Hoffman, a jack-of-all trades who had made his home in Boardman since 1919. At the time of the move he had to make, he was 66. But why Florida? Hoffman's reasoning made sense ... especially if you were sort of fiddle-footed, as he admittedly was.

Hoffman had purchased two lots somewhere east of Pensacola, Florida. Their cost was a fraction of the cost of a pair of lots in Boardman, and this was a major factor influencing his choices. And this, although he had bought "sight-unseen" but was assured the property was high and dry in an oak grove.

Over the many years of residence in Boardman, Hoffman had pursued a hobby of collecting arrowheads and the like. He had a sizable collection, too. And, some real curios, to boot! Hoffman brought forth one of his prizes, a display of three lower jawbones of "former residents of Blalock Island."

One of the jawbones had drawn some interest of anthropologists, Hoffman told me. In a newspaper account he produced, the big jawbones had been dubbed as coming from the "Ogre of Blalock Island."

On either side of the big jawbone in his display, Hoffman had placed jawbones of two normal-sized humans. The "ogre" jaw was

broken at one end but comparison with the others, indicated the head which surrounded it at one time must have been huge.

Hoffman said many who had seen his collection, pointed out about the large jaw that "if the head had a body to match, it must have been on a person standing eight or nine feet tall." Or, a Bigfoot? Many sightings have been in that height range.

We may never learn any answers to these questions, for Hoffman intended to make a "mini-museum"on wheels (he'd already bought a used school bus for this purpose) and show his collection that way. Base of operations for this was to be out of Pensacola.

I'd sure like to know if Grattan Hoffman ever made it to his "high-and-dry" lots and what happened to his collection.

And, if he never got out of Boardman with his artifacts, they just might be buried under the waters behind John Day Dam.

From whence they came.

Only a Few People and Good Food Supply Add up to Bigfoot Home

Dave Been holding twisted part of a small tree.

"The lack of people and a perpetual food supply in an area of thousands of acres makes this the perfect place for a Bigfoot or a colony of Bigfoots," proclaims Dave Been, Walla Walla contractor and ardent observer of the Sasquatch scene near Walla Walla.

Been's opinions on this subject are highly regarded locally as is his woods savvy. A native of Arkansas, Been was born and raised on a farm there. His woods experience dates back to early boyhood, he says. "I have spent almost all my life in the woods," he adds. His home today lies on the edge of the timberline of the Blue Mountains.

When he notes the dearth of people and the plentitude of food for such a creature, Been points out that the area he speaks of for the Bigfoot to roam include the Mill Creek Watershed (for the City of Walla Walla) and the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness Area which abuts the 'Shed and is four times as big.

This area is only a few minutes drive into the Blue Mountains from Walla Walla but excludes people for all practical purposes. Except for a limited hunting season with a few names drawn by lot each year,

people are kept from entering the Watershed. No motorized vehicles are allowed within the adjoining wilderness area, so not many people get into it.

"In both these sites you have a perpetual food chain going," Been asserts.

And, he adds bluntly, "right here is where they live the year around, too. I don't believe they travel about in nomadic fashion, either, they are staying right here."

Been says he is firmly convinced there are at least five, perhaps seven, of the Bigfoots living here. He says he has seen tracks of five different animals.

"The King of them lives in the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness Area, a site that is so huge and is so out of reach of most people. The biggest Bigfoots live there; the others are in the Watershed."

Been notes a few oddities he has observed. For one, he has observed a smaller track that seems to be of an animal that is a companion of a larger one but its tracks are found some 50 to 100 yards from the bigger tracks, running parallel to them. He has a cast of the smaller one, eight inches long.

"It's of a younger Bigfoot than the larger track," he said. "You can tell an older track because the older the track the more flesh buildup there will be and resulting in a less distinctive foot marking in earth."

Been also thinks one of the biggest mysteries of all about Bigfoot is its weight.

"Why is it so heavy?" he asks. "It must be tremendously massive."

Been will also point out something else he feels is unique to the Bigfoot: its propensity for twisting and even making knots of trees. While the trees he finds in such unnatural condition are usually small ones, an inch or two, he has a tree which is some four inches in diameter and twisted and broken!

Been sawed off a six foot section of the broken tree and brought it home.

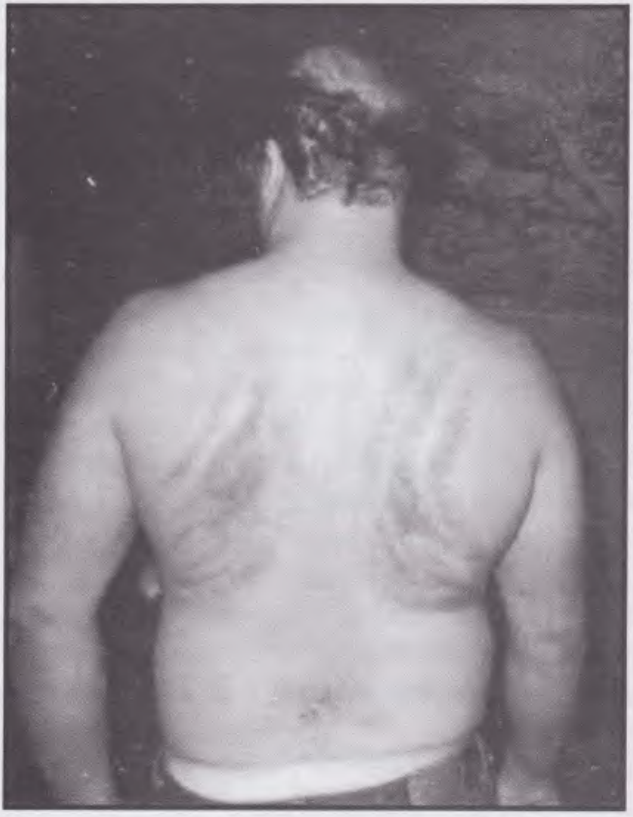
"Something had been carrying it off," he recalls. "There were a lot of Bigfoot tracks in the area and signs of some mighty big hands which had apparently twisted strong enough to peel the bark off in some places."

Been found this tree in 1992 and three years later found an even bigger tree. "This one was a dead tree and looked like two Bigfoots had taken hold of it and twisted it," he said.

Been feels the tree-twisting thing is a pattern to most Bigfoot sightings. He said he had talked about this feature of the Bigfoots and others, "people a whole lot wiser than me tell me the twisting is done to mark territory for the animals and also is done whenever they just plain get bored."

Been said the movie featuring anthropologist Jane Goodall, 'Gorillas in the Mist,' depicts gorillas going through the same tree-twisting effort.

Was Bigfoot the Guilty One When Man Was Mauled?



Scars thought possibly to have been made by an Bigfoot

Was it a Bigfoot that mauled a man on a lonely mountain road near Walla Walla?

Or, was it a bear?

Or, maybe some other animal found in these parts?

Dave (he preferred we use only his first name for this account) is a sizable guy at 35 years of age. He goes five-ten and 240 pounds, so

what ever tackled him that night was pretty good-sized, too.

First of all, what's the story doing in a book about Bigfoots? Good question and one that might not have an answer if Dave's brother hadn't taken a photo of Dave's back when he got home after the incident.

On Dave's brawny back are marks indicating a very huge hand had made those marks. And, it looks like it was a hand with very broad fingers as well. Which seemingly would rule out just about any animal except something equipped like a Bigfoot.

The incident happened in December of 1997 and around 10 p.m., as near as Dave can remember. The weather was cold and the month would indicate bears were in hibernation, so possibly rule out the bear answer. A Walla Walla woodsman, David Been, discharges the bear theory right off because of the lack of noise at the time of the attack.

"Bears can be the noisiest creatures around," Been said. "They a pretty noisy animal and let you know they're coming at you."

Dave, the victim, recalls that he was wearing two tee shirts and a sweat shirt as he was heading up the Scenic Loop Road a couple miles above Mill Creek road 10-12 miles east of Walla Walla. Spotting a beer bottle in the middle of the road, he stopped, got out of his pickup truck and chucked the bottle into the brush.

Then, as he was getting back into his truck, the unknown assailant hit him from behind..

"I didn't see it and it made no noise, I can't say what it was for sure, maybe a cow elk."

But, this sort of answer only leads to more questions than it resolves, say those who heard the story.

Dave says he really doesn't believe in Bigfoot but he doesn't totally; disbelieve either. He says that when one is killed and verified, or he actually sees one himself, then he will be a believer.

While Dave wanted only his first name used for this story, he is willing to talk about it to anyone interested. Those who want to do this, should contact the author of this book and Dave's address will be furnished.

It might forever remain a mystery just what sort of creature it was that dark night, but judging from the photograph of Dave's scars from the attack, Bigfoot has to be a prime candidate.

India Was Setting for Unusual Story of Bigfoot Sighting

One of the most compelling stories of Bigfoot sightings ever! And, I found it only because I succumbed to the persuasive bookseller's description.

The book, "The Long Walk," by Slavomir Rawics, is now in my extensive Bigfoot library. And, held in highest of Bigfoot categories because of the great description of what five men saw on their final leg of a months-long trek out of a northernmost Siberian labor camp. That sighting, in the Himalayas, came prior to the big Yeti flap of the 1950s.

The account of this remarkable Bigfoot sighting is found in the book, originally published by Lyons and Burford, New York, in 1956. Before we get to the sighting, allow me to share with you some of the bookseller's words to which I succumbed:

"The Long Walk is the astonishing story of a trek to freedom. In the spring of 1941, the author, a 26-year-old Polish lieutenant, escaped from a Soviet labor camp in Siberia with six fellow prisoners, including one American.

"Joined by a remarkable girl, Kristina, who gave them hope and courage, this heroic group braved the Himalayas, the desolate Siberian tundra, icy rivers, and the great Gobi desert, always a hair's breadth from death. They had no map, no compass, only an ax head, a homemade knife and fierce determination to survive."

Now, I might have given in to a less persuasive statement because I have always enjoyed books recounting how humans can survive great odds when thrown to the wilds. I suppose the reading in my youth of "Robinson Crusoe" started all that. But, we digress, back to "The Long Walk" and the Bigfoot encounter.

Finally, after their long walk from Siberia, the party reaches India. The party (shortened to five by death) had scaled the last of several peaks to reach and surmount the last. Author Rawics writes:

"Far off to the west I could see snow-covered giants which made a modest hill of the eminence on which I stood. Southward the country fell away dramatically.

"I knew I was looking at India."

So, the place is set and comes now the description:

"In all our wanderings through the Himalayan region we had encountered no creatures than man, dogs, and sheep. It was with quickening interest, therefore, that in the early stages of our descent on this last mountain Kolemenos (one of the men) drew our attention to two moving black specks against the snow about a quarter of a mile below us. We thought of animals and immediately food, but as we set off down to investigate we had no great hopes that they would await our arrival. The contours of the mountain temporarily hid them from view as we approached nearer, but when we halted on the edge of a bluff we found they were still there, twelve feet or so below us and about 100 yards away.

"Two points struck me immediately. They were enormous and they walked on their hind legs. The picture is clear in my mind, fixed there indelibly by a solid two hours of observation. We just could not believe what we saw at first, so we stayed to watch. Somebody talked about dropping down to their level to get a close-up view.

"Zaro (another member of the party) said, 'They look strong enough to eat us.'

"We stayed where we were. We weren't too sure of unknown creatures which refused to run away at the approach of men. I set myself to estimating their height on the basis of my military training for artillery observation. They could not have been much less than eight feet tall. One was a few inches taller than the other, in the relation of the average man to the average woman. They were shuffling quietly around on a flattish shelf which formed a part of the obvious route for us to continue our descent. We thought that if we waited long enough they would go away and leave the way clear for us. It was obvious they had seen us, and it was equally apparent they had no fear of us.

"The American said that eventually he was sure we should see them drop on all fours like bears. But, they never did.

"Their faces I could not see in detail, but the heads were squarish and the ears must lie close to the skull because there was no projection from the silhouette against the snow. The shoulders sloped

sharply down to a powerful chest. The arms were long and the wrists reached the level of the knees. Seen in profile, the back of the head was a straight line from the crown into the shoulders.

"We decided unanimously that we were examining a type of creature of which we had no previous experience in the wild, in zoos or in literature. It would have been easy to have seen them waddle off at a distance and dismissed them as either bear or big ape of the orang-outang species. At close range they defied facile description. There was something both of the bear and the ape about their general shape but they could not be mistaken for either.

"The colour was a rusty kind of brown. They appeared to be covered by two distinct kinds of hair---the reddish brown which gave them their characteristic colour forming a tight, close fur against the body, mingling with which were long, loose, straight hairs, hanging downwards, which had a slight greyish tinge as the light caught them."

The men continued to observe the odd pair of upright animals but the two refused to budge, even when Zaro did a "war dance" and even flinging pieces of ice at the creatures. Another hour passed and Rawics notes he had the "uncomfortable feeling they were challenging us to continue our descent across their ground."

At this, the American made the observation: "It occurs to me they might take it into their heads to come up and investigate US. It is obvious they are not afraid of us. I think we had better go while we are safe."

So, taking this suggestion, the party departed the scene, as Rawics concludes this closing part of his book:

"We pushed off around the rock and directly away from them. I looked back and the pair were standing still, arms swinging slightly, as though listening intently. What were they? For years they remained a mystery to me, but since recently I have read of scientific expeditions to discover the Abominable Snowman of the Himalayas and studied descriptions of the creature given by native hill men, I believe the five of us that day may have met two of the animals.

"If so, I think recent estimates of their height as about five feet is wrong. The creatures we saw must have been at least seven feet."

---- Out of print for many years, "The Long Walk" is now available in paperback at your favorite bookstore or it can be ordered for you.

COLOPHON

This book was printed and bound in the shop of George McCoy, which is located just west of Prescott in Walla Walla County in the state of Washington. The text was assembled by Vance Orchard and typesetting was done on an Apple G4 computer using QuarkXPress software. Type face is Times New Roman, photos were digitally mastered on Adobe Photo Deluxe software. Book was printed on Husky 60 pound offset 84 white paper, using metal plates on a Multi 1860CD offset printing press.

Cover was produced in Freehand 8 software and printed in color on a Xerox Docucolor 12 at Bennett Printing, 37 South Palouse Street in Walla Walla, Washington and plastic laminated, and perfect bound.

OX-YOKE PRESS

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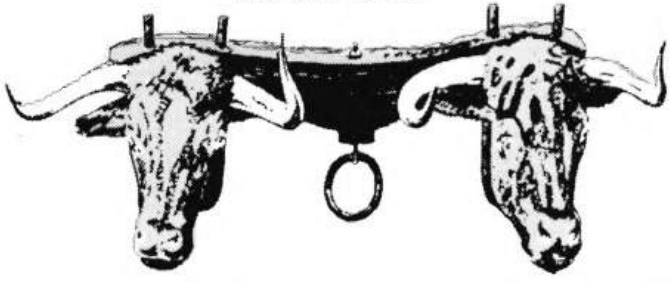

MILL CREEK WATERSHED
Home base for the Walla Walla Bigfoot

For 50 years Vance Orchard has written about the homeland of the Walla Walla Bigfoot. He began reporting the news of the Walla Walla Country in 1951 as the Roving Reporter for the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin and since 1990 as a columnist for The Times of Waitsburg. He readily admits to being hooked on the Walla Walla Bigfoot story since 1966 when he wrote a news story about some big footprints a mountain biker had seen.

That story brought the late Roger Patterson to Walla Walla to investigate the incident and to provide for Orchard the early hooking. This was a year before Patterson was to film his remarkable Bigfoot footage while with Bob Gimlin on Bluff Creek in northern California. After chasing down the many reports of Bigfoot activities in the Walla Walla area, Orchard remains firmly convinced in the reality of theWalla Walla Bigfoot and this region s being a prime area for serious Bigfoot research.

Vance Orchard

(Photo of Vance Orchard is Courtesy of the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin)